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THE

# LIVES OF THE PLAYERS.

VOL. I.

WORKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

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I.

With Portraits of Lord Byron and the Countess Guiccioli, and a View of Newstead Abbey.

LIFE OF LORD BYRON.

In One Volume. Fifth Edition.

II.

BOGLE CORBET; OR, THE EMIGRANTS.

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III.

LAWRIE TODD; OR, THE SETTLERS.

In Three Volumes, post 8vo. Second Edition.

IV.

SOUTHENNAN.

In Three Volumes, post 8vo.

THE

# LIVES OF THE PLAYERS.

BY JOHN GALT, ESQ.

AUTHOR OF

"THE LIFE OF BYRON," "ANNALS OF THE PARISH," &c.

"The best actors in the world, either for tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral."

SHAKSPEARE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

HENRY COLBURN AND RICHARD BENTLEY,

NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

1831.

LONDON:
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Dorset Street, Fleet Street.

# PREFACE.

Although this compilation will probably be among the most amusing books in the language, still the author can lay claim to very little merit. The subject was suggested by a literary friend, and he had only to select from abundant materials.

In one respect he may not be deemed undeserving of some indulgent consideration. The world is well aware that many of the early adventures of those who in riper life have added to our harmless pleasures, are difficult to describe in such a manner as not to render some of the most entertaining objectionable. His object, however, was to produce a parlour-book, and the rule he prescribed to himself was to introduce nothing into it that would not be tolerated on the stage by the most fastidious. In this he is sensible that he may be questioned by those liquorish epicures who care not for the woodcock without the trail.

The nature of his task necessarily directed him to disregard dates and minute circumstances, save in a few epochal events, and to study the general appearance rather than those particular markings which distinguish

personal from historical portraiture. His pencil has been withheld from warts, scars, and freckles, but the nobler features have been painted with industrious care. With several individuals he has perhaps not failed, and where he ventures to offer a judgment either on defects, talents, or degrees of excellence, he has not only endeavoured to be correct in weighing the testimony of others, but well supported where he has found himself constrained to differ from received opinions.

It will depend on the reception which these volumes may receive from the public, whether more shall hereafter be added. In the mean time, the author cannot omit to acknowledge the obligations he is under for access to the dramatic collections of Mr. Mathews and Mr. Winstone, which, though in some respects different, are each more valuable to histrionic biography, particularly the latter, than the works which relate to the lives of the players in the British Museum. He cannot also but acknowledge the politeness with which he was invited to examine a collection of original letters in the London Institution. His opportunities have therefore been such as to enable him to give a fair general view of the most important characters, and in doing so he has studied less to echo the judgment of others, than to be firm and impartial in his own.

1st June 1831.

# LIVES

CONTAINED

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# LIVES OF THE PLAYERS.

## INTRODUCTION.

The notion that the English Stage has been indebted to no one so much as to Sir William Davenant, originated when the state of the theatre in Shakspeare's time was no longer recollected. It has been propagated by Malone, who was evidently not versed in the antiquity of the performed drama, and by Dr. Drake, in his ponderous *Shakspeare and his Times*, who has not investigated the subject with the same commendable zeal that he has done topics of inferior importance. For, in treating of the furniture of the stage, and arguing that the scenery was better and more appropriate than Mr. Malone was disposed to allow, the Doctor has not adverted to his own reasoning with respect to the masques and pageants occasionally performed for the entertainment of the court. These gorgeous spectacles were completely theatrical in their nature, and only not dramatic because they involved no plot. The different companies of actors were, it is true, not likely to be at so much expense as the courtiers in their exhibitions; but it should be recollected, that the actors, in Shakspeare's time, were generally in the



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pay of some of the nobility,* and it is not probable that the patron of the player withheld his munificence from the decorations of the theatre. The reverse should be inferred; besides, in all probability, the ornaments of the courtly masques and pageants were disposed of to the theatres in the same manner as the wardrobes of the London houses, in our own time, are sometimes recruited from cast-off court-dresses. If I am correct in this conjecture, we may form some idea of the style of the scenery with which the plays of Shakspeare were performed by looking at Ben Jonson's *Hymenæal Masque;* indeed the note is too curious and too apposite to be omitted.

'Here the upper part of the scene, which was all of clouds, and artificially to swell and ride like the rack, began to open, and the air clearing, in the top thereof was discovered Juno sitting on a throne, supported by two beautiful peacocks; her attire rich, and like a queen; a white diadem on her head, from whence descended a veil, and that bound by a fascia of several coloured silks, set with all sorts of jewels, and raised on the top with lilies and roses; in her right hand she held a sceptre, in the other a timbrel; at her golden feet the hide of a lion was placed; round about her the spirits of the air in several colours making music; above her the region of

* Sir Robert Lane's company 1572; Earl of Leicester's company was incorporated in 1574; in the same year Lord Clinton's; Lord Warwick's and the Lord Chamberlain's 1572; the Earl of Sussex 1576; the Lord Howard 1577; Earl of Essex 1578; the Lord Strange 1579; and the same year Earl of Darby; the Lord Admiral 1591; the Earl of Hartford 1592; the Lord Pembroke 1593; and at the close of her Majesty's reign, the Earl of Worcester had in his pay a company of theatrical performers.

fire with a continual motion was seen to whirl circularly, and Jupiter standing on the top brandishing his thunder; beneath her the rainbow Iris, and on the two sides eight ladies attired richly, and alike in the most celestial colours, who represented her powers, as she is the governess of marriage.'

Here we have scenery, dresses, and machinery, as appropriate as in any spectacle that has been produced in our own time at Drury-Lane or Covent-Garden. Moreover, Coryate, in his *Crudities*, published in 1611, writing from Venice in 1608, in describing the theatre, says—'The house is very beggarly and base, in comparison of our stately play-houses in England; neither can their actors compare with us for apparel, showe, and music.'

But in addition to this proof, I would add—

"The order and signification of the dumb show" before the fourth act of the venerable tragedy of *Gorboduc*, 1st. "The music of howebries began to play; during which there came forth from under the stage, as though out of hell, three furies—Alecto, Megæra, and Tisiphone, clad in black garments, sprinkled with blood and flames; their bodies girt with snakes, their heads spread with serpents instead of hair, the one bearing in her hand a snake, the other a whip, and the third a burning firebrand, each driving before them a king and a queen, which, moved by furies, unnaturally had slain their own children. The names of the kings and queens were these:—Tantalus, Medea, Athamas, Ino, Cambyses, Althea. After that the Furies and these had passed about the stage thrice, they departed, and then the music ceased."

This performance took place in the course of the year in which Shakspeare was born. Those who tell us that Shakspeare's plays were performed in front of an old blanket, with a label on it, to inform the audience when the scene lay in Rome or in London, may as well tell us that Burleigh House, one of the noblest yet in England, erected in the days of Shakspeare, is of lath and plaster, covered with thatch.

The drama in England arose much in the same way as it did in Greece. The strollers, with their theatres in the yards of inns, answered to the company and carts of Thespis; and the improvements were gradual till in 1631, to use the words of Sir George Buck, who wrote at that time,—"Dramatic poesy is so lively expressed and represented upon the public stages of this city, London, as Rome in the highest pitch of her pomp and glory never saw it better performed." Much of the disparagement of the old English stage, a circumstance little known, is to be attributed to the defence of poesy by that dainty and fastidious gentleman, Sir Philip Sidney, whom none of the commentators on Shakspeare have hitherto noticed for an insidious attack on *The Tempest*.

These slight notices I have deemed it expedient to introduce here, because, while I am very willing to admit that the English theatre is under great obligations to Sir William Davenant, I yet think that he was, by his French importations, the original corrupter of the old English stage, and that all we owe to the tasteful corrections of the late John Philip Kemble, have been only endeavours to restore the primitive style.

# CHARLES HART.

The authentic records of the British Stage do not reach in any considerable quantity much farther back than the era of the Restoration. That there were good actors long before that time cannot be doubted; it cannot, indeed, be supposed that the dramas of Shakspeare and his contemporaries were acted by ordinary men, and it is certain that the histrionic art was then practised more as a trade than it perhaps has been since. The subject of the present memoir, Charles Hart, served a regular apprenticeship to the business.

He was the grand-nephew of Shakspeare; his father, also a player, being the eldest son of the poet's sister. At the usual age he was placed as an apprentice with Robinson, then a celebrated actor, and commenced his career by playing female characters. In Shirley's tragedy of *The Carnival*, he is said to have made his first appearance as the Duchess, or it was, at least, in that part that he first distinguished himself.

On the abolition of the theatres in 1647 by the Puritans, many of the players went into the army, and Hart became a Lieutenant of horse in Prince Rupert's own regiment. But when the fate of Charles I. was settled, he was among the actors who returned to the clandestine practice of their former vocation in the Metropolis, and was among the party taken into custody while performing

the tragedy of *Rollo*. Upon that occasion he sustained the part of Otto.

Hart was enrolled in the King's company established by Killigrew after the Restoration, and when Drury-Lane Theatre was opened on the 8th April 1663, he made his first appearance as Demetrius, in Beaumont and Fletcher's play of *The Humourous Lieutenant*. The play-bill of the evening has been preserved, and cannot but be curious to the stage antiquary. It was as follows:

*By his Majesty's Company of Comedians,*

At the New Theatre in Drury-Lane,

This day being Thursday, April 8, 1663, will be acted a Comedy called

THE HUMOUROUS LIEUTENANT.

| | |
|---|---|
| *King,* | Mr. Wintersel. |
| *Demetrius,* | Mr. Hart. |
| *Seleucus,* | Mr. Bart. |
| *Leontius,* | Major Mahon. |
| *Lieutenant,* | Mr. Clun. |
| *Celia,* | Mrs. Marshall. |

This play ran twelve successive nights, but how much of its success was owing to the talent of Hart, we have not the means of ascertaining, for the house was new, and afforded an attraction separate from that of the exhibition. It is, however, certain that our hero possessed eminent professional merit, and was, at least, the second performer in the company. It was said of him, that what he delivered satisfied every one; the eyes of the spectators were prepossessed and charmed by his action

even before the words of the poet reached their ears; and that the best tragedies on the English stage received splendour from his performance.

But independently of his own excellence on the stage, something like fame is reflected upon him by having, about the year 1667, introduced the famous Nell Gwyn to public notice. At that period his circumstances were flourishing, and playgoing must then have been generally in fashion, for besides his regular salary of three pounds per week, he is said to have cleared about a thousand pounds per annum by his share in the theatre. Ill health compelled him to retire about the year 1679, and he soon after died.

Notwithstanding his near relationship to Shakspeare, his own merit as a performer, and the general propriety with which he managed the theatre, these barren notices contain every thing of any importance that has been preserved of this eminent delight of his own time. His name is frequently mentioned, and always with some token of respect for his professional talent, or the general respectability of his behaviour as a man, and yet it is but as a link in the history of the theatre that his name has been transmitted to posterity.

# THOMAS BETTERTON.

It is a remarkable fact in the history of the fine arts, that the greatest masters in the several departments have appeared in the spring, as it were, of their respective professions; and perhaps if we possessed authentic accounts of the English players of Shakspeare's time, we should find the rule confirmed in their case. It so happens, however, that we have hardly any materials for the biography of Betterton's predecessors. He was himself born in Tothil-street, Westminster, in August 1635. At that time his father was under-cook to King Charles I.

Having early evinced a predilection for literature, it was the intention of his family that he should be educated for one of the liberal professions; but the confusion of the times frustrated this intention. In consequence, however, of his fondness for reading, his father so far consulted the inclinations of the boy, as to apprentice him to a respectable bookseller, one Rhodes, at the Bible in Charing-cross, who had been wardrobe-keeper to the theatre in Blackfriars before the suppression of dramatic amusements.

In 1659, about the time when General Monck marched with his army from Scotland towards London, Rhodes got a licence to form a company of players, and he fitted up the cockpit in Drury-Lane for their performance. The actors were chiefly new to the stage, and two of his

apprentices—Betterton in men's parts, and Kynaston in women's—were at their head. What would be thought of the dignified bibliopoles of the present day—aldermen of London and bailies of Edinburgh—were they so to gratify the propensities of their apprentices! The eve of the Restoration showed, indeed, that the winter was over and gone, under which the players, like the singing birds, had so long pined.

The particular part in which Betterton made his first appearance is not recorded; but it is mentioned that he got great applause in *The Loyal Subject*, *The Wildgoose Chase*, and *The Spanish Curate*, and was distinguished by the vigour and elegance of his manly personations; his voice being then, according to Roscius Anglicanus, audible, strong, full, and articulate.

The fame of Beaumont and Fletcher was then at its zenith, and in their plays, as well as in the *Pericles* ascribed to Shakspeare, and *The Bondman* of Massinger, he established the groundwork of his great reputation.

The actors employed by Rhodes were, in the spring of 1662, placed under the guidance of Sir William Davenant, and styled the Duke of York's Company; and the remains of the old companies were received by Killigrew, sworn by the Lord-Chamberlain as servants of the crown, and styled the King's Company. About ten of the King's Company were in the royal household establishment, having each ten yards of scarlet cloth, with a proper quantity of lace for liveries, and in their warrants from the Lord-Chamberlain were styled gentlemen of the great chamber. It is doubtful if the like appointments were extended to the Duke's Company. They were both, however, in high estimation with the public, and so much the delight and concern of the court, that even their pri-

vate government was regarded as a special charge, and their particular differences, pretensions, and complaints, were generally determined by the personal decision of the king or the duke.

Sir William Davenant opened a new theatre in Lincoln's-inn-fields, and produced there his own drama, *The Siege of Rhodes*, a play in two parts, embellished with such scenery and decorations as had never been before exhibited, it was supposed, on the boards of an English theatre. In this play Betterton appeared with great distinction, insomuch that he was soon after encouraged to attempt the part of *Hamlet*, having derived considerable advantage for the part from the hints of Sir William Davenant, to whom the acting of its original representative, taught by the great author, had been familiar. Downs expressly declares, that this character enhanced Betterton's reputation to the utmost, and there is much collateral evidence to substantiate its brilliant superiority.

"You have seen," says Cibber, "a *Hamlet*, perhaps, who on the first appearance of his father's spirit, has thrown himself into all the straining vociferation requisite to express rage and fury, and the house has thundered with applause, though the misguided actor was all the while, as Shakspeare terms it, 'tearing a passion into rags.' I am the more bold to offer you this particular instance, because the late Mr. Addison, while I sat by him to see this scene acted, made the same observation, asking me, with some surprise, if I thought Hamlet 'should be in so violent a passion with the ghost, which though it might have astonished, had not provoked him; for you may observe, that in his beautiful speech the passion never rises beyond an almost breathless astonishment, or an impatience limited by filial reverence to inquire into the sus-

pected wrongs that may have raised him from his peaceful tomb, and a desire to know what a spirit so seemingly distressed might wish or enjoin a sorrowful son to execute towards his future quiet in the grave.' This was the light into which Betterton threw this scene, which he opened with a pause of mute amazement; then rising slowly to a solemn trembling voice, he made the ghost equally terrible to the spectator as to himself; and in the descriptive part of the natural emotions which the ghastly vision gave him, the boldness of his expostulation was still governed by decency, and manly but not braving, his voice never rising into that seeming outrage or wild defiance of what he naturally revered. But, alas! to preserve this medium between mouthing and meaning too little, to keep the attention more pleasingly awake by a tempered spirit than by mere vehemence of voice, is, of all the master-strokes of an actor, the most difficult to reach. In this, none yet have equalled Betterton. He that feels not himself the passion he would raise, will talk to a sleeping audience, but this never was the fault of Betterton."

As in this character he was, in the opinion of many, without an equal, and continued to be applauded in it even when declined into extreme old age, it is pleasing to contrast the vigour in which his conception of the part remained by him to the last, with Cibber's description, which may be considered as the estimate of his style of performing it in the prime of life. In No. 71, of *The Tatler*, there is the following account of him, when he was no less than seventy-four years of age.

" Had you seen him to-night," says the correspondent, " you had seen the force of action in perfection. Your admired Mr. Betterton behaved himself so well, that

though now about seventy-four, he acted youth, and by the prevalent power of proper manner, gesture, and voice, appeared through the whole drama a young man of great expectation, vivacity, and enterprise. The soliloquy where he began the celebrated sentence of 'To be, or not to be'—the expostulation where he explains with his mother in her closet—the noble ardour, after seeing his father's ghost, and his generous distress for the death of Ophelia, are each of them circumstances which dwell strongly upon the minds of the audience, and would certainly affect their behaviour on any parallel occasions in their own lives."

In addition to this testimony to his merits in *Hamlet*, that of the author of *The Lick at the Laureat* may be quoted.

"I have lately been told by a gentleman, who has frequently seen Betterton perform *Hamlet*, that he observed his countenance, which was naturally ruddy and sanguine, in the scene of the Third Act, where his father's ghost appears, through the violent and sudden emotion of amazement and horror, turn instantly on the sight of his father's spirit, as pale as his neckcloth, when his whole body seemed to be affected with a tremor inexpressible, so that had his father's ghost actually risen before him, he could not have been seized with more real agonies; and this was felt so strongly by the audience, that the blood seemed to shudder in their veins likewise, and they in some measure partook of the astonishment and horror with which they saw this excellent actor affected."

We have no stronger testimony of the merits of any actor than these attestations convey, nor have we witnessed, in our time, any performance of *Hamlet*, that in

effect upon the audience could compare with what the latter author has described.

In the course of 1663, Betterton married Mrs. Saunderson, an actress in the same company with himself, of great talent and spotless reputation. This lady, it may be remarked, was still single, though denominated mistress. Miss, in fact, was, in Betterton's time, a term of reproach. Dryden, in the epilogue to *The Pilgrim*, 1670, says, —

> Misses there were but modestly concealed.

Miss Cross, who is particularly noticed in Hayne's epilogue to Farquhar's *Love and a Bottle*, was the first actress announced as Miss, and received that distinction about the year 1702; Dr. Johnson says, the term was appropriated to gentlemen's daughters under ten until far down in the last century.

Mrs. Betterton's *Lady Macbeth* was considered one of the most admirable performances on the stage. Even Mrs. Barry, who, for excellence, acquired the epithet of The famous, could not in that part, with all her superior strength and melody of voice, throw out those quick and careless strokes of terror and nature from the disorder of a guilty mind, which the other effected with a facility that rendered them at once tremendous and delightful. Time, says Colley Cibber, could not impair her skill, though he brought her person to decay. She was to the last the admiration of all true judges of nature, and lovers of Shakspeare, in whose plays she chiefly excelled. After she quitted the stage, several good actresses were improved by her instructions.

She was a woman of an unblemished and sober life, and had the honour to teach Queen Anne, when Princess,

the part of *Semandra* in *Mithridates*, which she acted at court in King Charles the Second's time. After the death of Mr. Betterton, the queen ordered her a pension for life, but she lived not to receive more than the first half-year of it. The principal characters sustained by her were, *Ianthe* in the *Siege of Rhodes*, *Ophelia*, *Juliet*, *Queen Catharine*, *Duchess of Malfy*, the *Amorous Widow*, and many others not less remarkable for their importance than their variety. She possessed great sensibility, and was so strongly affected at the death of her husband as to lose her senses, which, however, were recovered a short time previous to her own decease.

It has been alleged that Mrs. Betterton was the first English woman that appeared in any regular drama on a public stage, but, notwithstanding the plausibility with which this opinion has been maintained, it seems still doubtful. The first actress performed *Desdemona* when *Othello* was acted, on Saturday, the 8th of December, 1660, at the Red Bull Theatre, in Vere-street, Clare-market; and there seems to be only conjecture for supposing that it was performed by Mrs. Betterton, for we have met with no evidence that her first appearance was earlier than April 1662, when she acted *Ianthe* in the *Siege of Rhodes*. She is supposed to have died about 1712.

At the death of Sir William Davenant, on the 17th of April 1688, Betterton succeeded to a portion of the management of the Duke's Company. So great indeed was the estimation in which both he and his lady were held, that when a pastoral called *Calisto, or the Chaste Nymph*, was to be performed at court by persons of quality, they were appointed to instruct them in their respective parts.

In 1682, an union had been effected with the rival company, in which Mr. Betterton continued to direct, till, in 1690, a new patent was issued, which dispossessed him of importance and authority. He then confederated with the principal performers, and obtained an independent licence from King William, under which they built a new theatre in Portugal-street, Lincoln's-inn, by subscription, and opened it on the 30th of April 1695, with Congreve's comedy of *Love for Love.*

In 1697, the prejudice of the Puritans against the stage began to revive. A person of the name of Collier published an invective on the subject, which had such an effect upon the public mind, that Betterton and Mrs. Bracegirdle were fined for uttering profane and indecent expressions, and the spirit of the times began to rise once more against the theatre. The feeling infected certain inhabitants of Lincoln's-inn-fields, who fancying themselves incommoded by the carriages which the playhouse drew together, moved the Court of King's Bench for its suppression. After struggling for some time against the evils of discord within the theatre, and public prejudice without, Betterton, enfeebled by age and infirmity, transferred his licence to Sir John Vanburgh, who erected a handsome theatre in the Haymarket, in which our veteran accepted an engagement as an actor only.

His salary had never exceeded four pounds a week; but he possessed prudence, and saved several thousand pounds, which, however, he had the misfortune to lose in his old age by a commercial adventure to the East Indies, and from that time his circumstances were greatly straitened, insomuch that the performers were induced to propose for him a benefit, which took place on the 13th of April 1709, and was announced in *The*

*Tatler*, No. 157, for Tuesday, April 11th, in the following terms :—

" Mr. Bickerstaff, in consideration of his ancient friendship and acquaintance with Mr. Betterton, and great esteem for his merit, summons all his disciples, whether dead or living, mad or tame, toasts, smarts, dappers, pretty fellows, musicians or scrapers, to make their appearance at the play-house in the Haymarket on Thursday next, when there will be a play acted for the benefit of the said Betterton."

The play was *Love for Love*, and on this occasion Mrs. Barry and Mrs. Bracegirdle came from their retirement to aid their ancient coadjutor by the resumption of the parts which they had originally sustained. Congreve is said to have furnished a prologue, which was never submitted to print; and Rowe wrote the following epilogue, recited by Mrs. Barry :—

As some brave Knight who once with spear and shield
Had sought renown in many a well-fought field,
But now no more with sacred Fame inspired,
Was to a peaceful hermitage retired ;
There if by chance disastrous tales he hears
Of matron's wrongs and captive virgin's tears,
He feels soft pity urge his generous breast,
And moves once more to succour the distress'd ;
Buckled in mail he sallies on the plain,
And turns him to the feats of arms again :
So we, to former leagues of friendship true,
Have bid once more our peaceful homes adieu
To aid old Thomas, and to pleasure you ;
Like errant damsels boldly we engage,
Arm'd as you see for the defenceless stage.
Time was when this good man no help did lack,
And scorn'd that any she should hold his back ;
But now, so age and frailty have ordain'd,
By two at once he 's forced to be sustain'd ;

You see what failing nature brings man to,
And yet let none insult,—for aught we know,
She may not wear so well with some of you ;
Though old, you find his strength is not clean past,
But true as steel, he 's mettle to the last ;
If better he perform'd in days of yore,
Yet now he gives you all that 's in his pow'r,
What can the youngest of you all do more ?
What he has been, though present praise be dumb,
Shall haply be a theme in times to come,
As now we talk of Roscius and of Rome.
Had you withheld your favours on this night,
Old Shakspeare's ghost had risen to do him right ;
With indignation had you seen him frown
Upon the worthless, witless, tasteless town ;
Grieved and repining you had heard him say,
Why are the Muse's labours cast away ?
Why did I only write what only he could play ?
But since, like friends to wit, thus throng'd you meet,
Go on, and make the generous work complete ;
Be true to merit, and still own his cause,
Find something for him more than bare applause ;
In just remembrance of your pleasures past,
Be kind, and give him a discharge at last ;
In peace and ease life's remnant let him wear,
And hang his consecrated buskin here.

The play produced a large sum for that age, but it was not a sufficient provision for the infirmities of the actor ; and "Old Thomas," as he was now called, was still obliged to labour, when permitted by the intermissions of disease, for that subsistence which his services should long before have secured.

The public, however, was not forgetful of his merits, for on the 25th of April, in the year following, he was admitted to another benefit, which, with the patronage bestowed upon its predecessor, is supposed to have netted nearly one thousand pounds—an enormous sum

considering the value of money in those days. It beggars even the prodigality lavished on the performers at the Opera-house. Upon this last occasion he undertook his celebrated part of *Melantius* in the *Maid's Tragedy*, from the performance of which he ought to have been deterred, for he had just been suddenly seized with the gout; he was, however, induced to employ a repellent medicine, which lessened the swelling of his feet, and permitted him to walk in his slippers. He acted with peculiar spirit, and was received with universal applause: but the distemper returned with unusual violence, ascended to his head, and terminated his existence in three days from the date of this fatal performance. On the 2nd of May 1710, his remains were deposited, with much funeral pomp, in the cloisters of Westminster Abbey, an event which Sir Richard Steele has related in the following pathetic manner:—

"Having received notice that the famous actor, Mr. Betterton, was to be interred this evening in the cloisters near Westminster Abbey, I was resolved to walk thither, and see the last office done to a man whom I always very much admired, and from whose action I had received more strong impressions of what is great and noble in human nature, than from the arguments of the most solid philosophers, or the descriptions of the most charming poets I have ever read. As the rude and untaught multitude are no way wrought upon more effectually than by seeing public punishments and executions, so men of letters and education feel their humility most forcibly exercised when they attend the obsequies of men who had arrived at any perfection in liberal accomplishments.

"I have hardly a notion that any performer of antiquity could surpass the action of Mr. Betterton in any of the

occasions he has appeared on our stage. The wonderful agony which he appeared in when he examined the circumstance of the handkerchief in *Othello*, the mixture of love that intruded upon his mind upon the innocent answers *Desdemona* makes, betrayed in his gestures such a variety and vicissitude of passions, as would admonish a man to be afraid of his own heart, and perfectly convince him that it is to stab it, to admit that worst of daggers—jealousy. Whoever reads, in his closet, this admirable scene, will find that he cannot, except he has as warm an imagination as Shakspeare himself, find any but dry, incoherent, and broken sentences; but a reader that has seen Betterton act it observes there could not be a word added, that longer speeches had been unnatural,—nay, impossible in Othello's circumstances. The charming passage in the same tragedy, where he tells the manner of winning the affection of his mistress, was urged with so moving and graceful an energy, that while I walked in the cloisters I thought of him with the same concern as if I waited for the remains of a person who had, in real life, done all that I had seen him represent. The gloom of the place, and faint lights before the ceremony appeared, contributed to the melancholy disposition I was in, and I began to be extremely afflicted that *Brutus* and *Cassius* had any difference—that *Hotspur's* gallantry was so unfortunate—and that the mirth and good-humour of *Falstaff* could not exempt him from the grave.

" The mention I have here made of Mr. Betterton, for whom I had, as long as I have known anything, a very great esteem, and gratitude for the pleasure he gave me, can do him no good; but it may, possibly, be of service to the unhappy woman he has left behind him, to have it known that this great tragedian was never in a scene half

so moving as the circumstances of his affairs created at his departure."

"He was an actor," says Colley Cibber, "as Shakspeare was an author, both without competitors, formed for the mutual assistance and illustration of each other's genius.... How Shakspeare wrote, all men who have a taste for nature may read and know; but with what higher rapture would he still be read, could they conceive how Betterton played him. Then might they know the one was born alone to speak what the other only knew to write. Pity it is that the momentary beauties flowing from an harmonious elocution cannot, like those of poetry, be their own record; that the animated graces of the player can live no longer than the instant breath and motion that presents them, or at best can but faintly glimmer through the memory or imperfect attestation of a few surviving spectators. Could how Betterton spoke be as easily known as what he spoke, then might you see the muse of Shakspeare in her triumph, with all her beauties in their best array, rising into real life, and charming her beholders. He had a voice of that kind which gave more spirit to terror than to the softer passions—of more strength than melody. The rage and jealousy of *Othello* became him better than the sighs and tenderness of *Castalio*. In *Castalio* he only excelled others; in *Othello* he excelled himself, which you will easily believe, when you consider that, in spite of his complexion, *Othello* has more natural beauties than the best actor can find in all the magazine of poetry to animate his power and delight his judgment. The person of this excellent actor was suitable to his voice, more manly than sweet, not exceeding the middle stature, inclining to the corpulent, of a serious and penetrating aspect, his limbs nearer the athletic than the de-

licate proportion; yet however formed, there arose from the harmony of the whole a commanding mien of majesty, which the fair-faced, or, as Shakspeare calls them, 'the curled darlings of his time,' ever wanted something to be equal masters of."

Anthony Ashton, however, gives the following description of his person, which is certainly calculated to lessen the effect of Cibber's eulogium. "Mr. Betterton," says he, "although a superlative good actor, laboured under an ill figure, being clumsily made, having a great head, a short thick neck, stooped in the shoulders, and had fat short arms, which he rarely lifted higher than his stomach. His left hand frequently lodged in his breast, between his coat and waistcoat, while with his right he prepared his speech. His actions were few but just; he had little eyes and a broad face, was slightly pock-fretten, and had a corpulent body, with thick legs and large feet; he was better to meet than to follow, for his aspect was serious, venerable, and majestic: in his latter times a little paralytic. His voice was low and grumbling, yet he could time it by an artful climax, which enforced universal attention even from the fops and orange-girls."

Cibber's description applies to Betterton when in the fulness of strength and highest power in action, whereas Ashton paints him when he was become an old man. He was not at seventy equal to what he had been at fifty, but to the last he was without his equal; and for many years after his decease, his parts in Shakspeare were considered as unsupplied.

Mr. Betterton was celebrated for polite behaviour to the dramatic writers of his time, and distinguished, by singular modesty, in not presuming to understand the chief points of any character they offered him, till their

own notions had been ascertained, and, if possible, adopted. He is also praised for extending pecuniary assistance to embarrassed writers, till the success of a doubtful production might enable them to remunerate their generous creditor. Indeed, Mr. Betterton's benevolence was coupled with such magnanimity that, upon the death of that unhappy friend to whose counsels his little fortune had been sacrificed, he took charge of a surviving daughter, educated her at considerable expense, and not only made her an accomplished actress, but a valuable woman. The lady was afterwards Mrs. Boman.

Among other testimonies of deference to his judgment, and regard for his zeal, the tributes of Dryden and Rowe have been brilliantly recorded. In the preface to *Don Sebastian*, Dryden says,—

"About twelve hundred lines have been cut off from this tragedy since it was first delivered to the actors. They were, indeed, so judiciously lopped by Mr. Betterton, to whose care and excellent action I am equally obliged, that the connection of the story was not lost.'

And Rowe, in his Life of Shakspeare, says,—"I must own a particular obligation to Mr. Betterton for the most considerable part of the passages relating to this life which I have here transmitted to the public,—his veneration for the memory of Shakspeare having engaged him to make a journey into Warwickshire, on purpose to gather up what remains he could of a name for which he had so great a veneration."

Betterton was naturally of a cheerful temper, with a pious reliance upon the dispensations of Providence; and nothing can yield a higher idea of his affability than the effect his behaviour produced upon Pope, who must have been a mere boy when first admitted to his society. He

sat to the poet for his picture, which was painted in oil, and is, we believe, still preserved in the Earl of Mansfield's mansion at Caen Wood.

The claims of Betterton, as an original author, are not greatly distinguished, but his alterations and adaptations to the stage of several dramas are considered highly judicious.

# EDWARD KYNASTON.

The lives of the players cannot be long studied without impressing the student with the general laxity of their morals and principles, and something like wonder that such should be almost characteristic of a profession that undertakes to give lessons of virtue by example. When it is, however, considered that the drama has been really, notwithstanding what is said to the contrary, a mere amusement, the effect is quite legitimate. The common sense of the world revolts at the open inculcation of vice; but although the stage is now marvellously prudent in its speech, it is still not always a very austere observer of decorum in many of its actions; nor, indeed, was it made so circumspect as it is until a comparatively recent period: a curious speculation might be constructed upon these remarks.

If we look back to the time when the theatre was entirely a place of recreation, we shall find that the taste of all the spectators was indiscriminately consulted. There were then scenes for all sorts of men, and more of nature and of intellect in the performance; but there were also both sayings and doings which few women unveiled would at any time have been pleased to witness, and all would have shrunk from taking a part in. This fact will not be disputed; but it has not been sufficiently considered, that during what is called the exhibition of the licen-

tious plays, the audience consisted almost exclusively of men, and when women did present themselves among them, they were of a bold order—and in masque. To these causes, the endeavour to stimulate amusement, and the absence of that beautiful check which the presence of woman uniformly exercises over the coarser materials which the males are made of, and above all, to the female characters being performed by impudent, though effeminate-looking young men, the ravelled morality of the stage may partly be ascribed. The actors, in consequence, were chosen from that class of persons who, in private life, are usually the most companionable and the most dissipated.—Under this theory we may account for the general dissoluteness of the personal manners of the actors, seemingly so much at variance with their public representations. Perhaps we may venture to add, that as women were gradually introduced upon the stage, the propriety of the scene may have been improved; but the drama, in losing its freedom, declined in vigour and truth. Delicacy is always veiled, and cannot be enticed into public but by some sacrifice to decorum.

It was not until after the Restoration that women were permitted to appear on the English stage; and our present subject, Edward Kynaston, the fellow-apprentice of Betterton, is famed for having worn his petticoats with remarkable elegance and propriety. The ancient custom, however, of bringing on male gentlewomen was not always without perplexities. On one occasion, probably with reference to Kynaston, and still spoken of among the players with merriment, Charles II. came a little before his time, and not finding the actors ready, sent to inquire the cause of the delay. Upon which the manager, as his wisest course, told his Majesty the truth,

and with all becoming respect, informed him that the Queen was not shaved,—an incident which mightily amused the Defender of the Faith.

Edward Kynaston, though not famed for such eminent qualities as Betterton, was yet in his class a distinguished performer. In youth he was so beautiful, that the ladies of quality often prided themselves in taking him in their coaches to Hyde Park in his theatrical habit after the play, which in those days they had time to do, for the plays then began at four o'clock; indeed, to the last his appearance suffered no conspicuous decay; at sixty his teeth were all sound, white, and even, like those of a miss in her teens.

It has been said that he acquired an unnatural gravity of manner from his frequent performance of female parts; but in several characters this elicited uncommon beauties. His performance of Leon, in Fletcher's *Rule a Wife and Have a Wife*, was uniformly applauded as an achievement of very high merit, for a manliness and honest authority that all approved, and was thought well worth the best actor's imitation. In heroic characters he was imperious and vivid. His tyrants had great force, and in real majesty he was an admired master. Every sentiment in Shakspeare's Henry the Fourth came from him as if it had been his own, and the player was lost in the King he personated. This true majesty Kynaston was so entirely master of, that when he whispered to Hotspur,

"Send us your prisoners, or you 'll hear of it!"

he conveyed a more terrible menace than the loudest voice could have done. But the dignity of the character appeared still more brilliant in the scene between the

King and the Prince of Wales, in which the paternal grief for the errors of his son made the monarch only more revered; his reproaches, so just, yet so unmixed with anger, opening, as Cibber beautifully says, "the arms of Nature, with a secret wish that filial Duty and Penitence awakened, might fall into them with grace and honour."

What made this actor and Betterton more surprising, was, that though they both observed the same rules, those of Truth, they were each as different in their manner as in their personal form and features. But Kynaston stayed too long for himself upon the stage, his memory and spirit began to fail.

The parts in which he principally distinguished himself were Calis in *The Mad Lover;* Ismena in *The Maid of the Mill;* the heroine Aglama, in Sir John Suckling's play; Anthiope in *The Unfortunate Lovers,* and Evadne in *The Maid's Tragedy.* The three last of these parts were the earliest, and, in the opinion of Downs, the best of Kynaston's performances, for being then but a mannish youth, he made a tolerable substitute for feminine beauty. His forte was in moving compassion and pity.

When His Majesty's servants finally settled in 1663 at the new theatre in Drury-Lane, Kynaston was admitted to perform with them, and played Peregrine in Johnson's comedy of *The Fox.* He also held Sir Dauphine in *The Silent Woman,* and soon after succeeded to Otto in *The Duke of Normandy.* But I seek not to enumerate all his eminent parts.

It has been said, that from his early usage with female characters, he contracted some unpleasant tones in speaking. When George Powel was once ridding himself of the consequences of a recent debauch, Kynaston in-

quired if he still felt sick. "How is it possible to be otherwise," replied Powel, "when I hear you speak?"

It is, however, but justice to the acknowledged merits of Kynaston to observe, that the whine which has been attributed to him, could be no more than a tendency; for had it been a very conspicuous habit, the audience would have soon made him sensible that he must change it.

It appears that when Kynaston joined the King's actors, he acquired a share in the property of Drury-Lane; for on the 14th October, 1681, he conveyed over to Sir William Davenant, Betterton, and Smith, all the right he possessed to the property amassed there, on condition of receiving five shillings for every day upon which the Duke's company should act at Dorset-gardens, or elsewhere. He also engaged, if possible, to separate himself from the King's company, to act with the Duke's; in the event of doing so, his pension was to cease, and he was to be paid a weekly allowance of 3*l.*; moreover, he joined with Charles Hart to oblige Mr. Killigrew to consent to this arrangement, if necessary, by an action at law.

After this junction, he performed Maximus in Lord Rochester's alteration of *Valentinian*. In 1695, he followed the fortunes of Betterton to Lincoln's-Inn-Fields, where he performed in *Cyrus the Great*.

Concerning his private life, I have gleaned nothing interesting; but by the following anecdote it would seem that he was naturally vain of his personal elegance, in which he bore a great resemblance to the celebrated Sir Charles Sedley, of which he was very proud. On one occasion he got a suit of clothes made similar to those of that fashionable baronet, and appearing publicly in it, Sir Charles punished his vanity in his usual mischievous

way. He hired a bravo to pick a quarrel with Kynaston in the Park as himself, and to beat him most unmercifully. Kynaston protested he was not the person he was taken for; but the ruffian only redoubled his blows. When the baronet was remonstrated with upon the transaction, he told the actor's friends that Kynaston had not suffered so much in his bones, as *he* had in his character, the whole town believing that he had undergone the disgrace of the chastisement.

He left the stage before 1706, but the exact period is not recorded in any of my authorities, for in that year Downs speaks of Betterton and Underhill as being then the only remains of the Duke's servants. Kynaston died wealthy, and was buried in the church-yard of St. Paul's, Covent Garden.

## JOSEPH HAYNES.

Joseph Haynes was the Patch of the theatre, if we may venture, though but in metaphor, to transfer an officer or fool of regal consequence to the mimic kingdom. The place of his birth is not known, nor the exact condition of his parents, farther than that they were poor but in their character respectable. It would seem, however, that Westminster has the honour of having produced him, as Tobyas Thomas, his original biographer, states that he was educated at St. Martin's school, where his progress was so extraordinary as to attract great admiration; indeed, so remarkable were his aptitude and proficiency, that several gentlemen sent him to Oxford, in order that a lad of such lively intelligence should not be lost by the obscurity of his birth.

At college he was no less distinguished than he had been at school, and it is universally said of him, that had his discretion been equal to his wit, he might have established a flourishing fortune.

When Sir Joseph Williamson was elected Member for the University, he gave Haynes some employment, and after he became Secretary of State still continued him in his service. But the vanity and imprudence of Haynes were enemies to his advancement, for he had no correct notion of confidential business, and affected the airs of a statesman among his companions, by talking of

the contents of the public dispatches which he had translated into Latin for his patron; insomuch, that when he came to a tavern all were hushed but Machiavelli.

Conduct of this kind was not however approved by Sir Joseph, who, still without losing his regard for his humour and vivacity, found it necessary to be more wary with so indiscreet a servant, and accordingly recommended him to one of the heads of the University of Cambridge, by whom he was indulgently entertained, and where he took the degree of Master of Arts. His native character and propensity to tricks and jocularity continued, however, to keep pace with his learning; for, soon after he had attained his academical dignity, a company of strolling players came to the city, and Joe, as our hero was familiarly called by all who knew him, was easily persuaded to join them.

With these players he continued some time wandering over the country; at last he came to London, where he was induced to perform at a theatre then recently erected in Hatton-garden, and when that establishment was broken up, he obtained an engagement at Drury Lane, about the time when the Duke of Buckingham brought out the *Rehearsal;* and it so happened, that on the eve of the representation of that play, Lacy, who was to perform the part of Bays, fell sick, and Joe was suddenly substituted for him. By the Duke's suggestions, and the instructions which Lacy was able to give him, he made himself quickly master of the character, and performed it with great applause; indeed with such eminent success, that many of the nobility, and some of the most ingenious men of the time, became solicitous of his acquaintance. The Duke himself was so much pleased with him and interested in his curious peculiarities, that

when he went on his embassy to Paris he carried Haynes in his suite, and often entertained him more as a companion than so humble a dependent.

Joe was mightily delighted with the French people, and he was no less agreeable to them. His quaint pleasantry made him a fascinating companion to the men, and his whimsical passions as much so to the ladies. He soon saw, however, that he was deficient in rank, and to remedy the defect created himself a Count, and stayed behind the Duke as such when his Grace returned home.

He had now fairly set up on his own means, and his trade was prosperous; but no state of life is without its cares, for although he borrowed money for some time with great ease and success, liveries came to be paid, duns multiplied, and the steward on his estates in England was one of the most irregular fellows possible, neglecting always to make him remittances in the most embarrassing manner. In a word, this rogue of a steward became so intolerable that Joe was obliged to put himself out of harm's way from his Parisian creditors, and steering for Dieppe, embarked there for England.

He was joyously received by his old companions in London, and immediately joined the players at the theatre in Dorset Gardens, and there he became a noted dancer, "having," as says his biographer, "learned, it seems, in France that faculty so natural to the French, to fling his legs about." After some short time he left this theatre and went to Drury Lane, where he continued until it was destroyed by fire.

While the theatre was rebuilding, Killigrew and Hart sent the scene-shifter to Paris, to learn something of the machinery of the French stage, and Joe agreed to ac-

company him to act as his interpreter; but somehow Joe had occasion, before leaving London, to spend the money given for their expenses. This however was no great embarrassment, for he immediately nominated himself secretary to the Duke of Monmouth, who had gone on a secret expedition to Maestricht, and whom he was obliged immediately to follow. By this expedient he contrived to travel on horseback to Dover, the scene-shifter acting as his servant.

They soon reached Paris, where the Count, much to his surprise, found that the inhabitants had memories, and that he was recollected by those of whom he had done the honour of borrowing money; but he for some time parried their hints for payment with the facetious dexterity of a Sheridan. At last they became tired with his fencing, and resolved to prevent his escape. Joe, however, being informed by a tavern keeper of their kind intentions, resolved on the instant to be off; so borrowing from no less a personage than the rector of the Jesuits' College the sum of forty pounds, by a pretended note from the Duke of Monmouth, he returned to London with the scene-shifter, as well informed of the theatric machines and scenes of the Parisian theatre as if he had been all the time in Jerusalem.

Next summer, he went with the King's Company to Oxford, where his salary as a player being inadequate to his expenses, he turned fortune-teller; but notwithstanding that universities are the great hotbeds of all sorts of folly in opinion, he was obliged to decamp in the night for London.

Hart, who was a person of respectable conduct, had not been too well pleased with Joe's negotiations in France, and with his having squandered so much money

in Paris to no purpose, had some natural anger against him, and this was cause enough for Joe to cherish spite in return. In the play of *Catiline's Conspiracy*, acted about this time, a great number of senators of Rome were wanted, and Hart made Joe one, although his salary, being fifty shillings a week, freed him from any obligation to accept the dignity. Joe, however, after some symptoms of rebellion, complied. He got a scaramouch dress, a large full ruff, made himself whiskers from ear to ear, put on his head a merry Andrew's cap, and with a short pipe in his mouth, bearing a three-legged stool in his hand, he followed Hart on the stage, set himself down behind him, and began to smoke his pipe, and to laugh and point at him. This ludicrous figure put the whole theatre in a roar of laughter. Hart, who was a man of such self-possession and equanimity that, happen what might, he never discomposed himself, continued his part without being aware of Joe's behaviour, wondering, however, at the seemingly unaccountable mirth. At last, happening to turn his head, he beheld Joe, and in great wrath instantly made his exit, swearing he never would set his foot on the stage unless Joe were immediately dismissed. Joe was accordingly sent off, but nothing downhearted, he instantly joined a company of strollers at Greenwich, where he acted and danced for some time; but tiring soon, he lampooned them all and came to London.

Joe had not forgotten that Hart had been the cause of his dismissal, and resolved to be revenged; accordingly, as he was one day walking in the street, he met a parson of an odd, simple appearance, whom he accosted in a friendly manner, as if they had been formerly acquainted, although he had never seen him before, and they adjourn-

ed together to a tavern, where the parson informed Joe that he had been Chaplain to the ship Monke, but was then in lack of employment. Joe expressed great satisfaction at hearing the news, as it was in his power to help him to a place of sixty pounds a year, bed, board, and washing, besides gifts at Christmas and Easter, only for officiating one hour in the four-and-twenty, from nine to ten o'clock in the forenoon. The marine priest was delighted, and, returning his warmest thanks, entreated Joe to inform him of the particulars. Upon which Joe told him that his name was Haynes, that he was one of the patentees of Drury Lane theatre, and that he would make him chaplain to the playhouse.

"Against to-morrow," said Joe, "I would have you provide yourself with a bell, and there is half-a-crown to buy one; and at nine o'clock go to the playhouse and ring your bell and call them all to prayers, saying, in an audible voice, 'Players, come to prayers! players, come to prayers!' This you must do, lest they mistake you for the dustman, both bells being so much alike. But there is one thing that I particularly desire you to take care of; on the third door on the left hand, lives one Mr. Hart. That gentleman, whether he be delirious or frantic, or whether he be possessed of some notions of Atheism, if you mention prayers, will laugh at you, perhaps swear, curse, and abuse you. If it proceed from the first, the poor unhappy gentleman ought to be pitied; but if from the latter, he shall quit the house, for I will never suffer such wickedness in any playhouse where I am concerned; and do, my good Sir, let it be your earnest endeavour to find out the cause, and by your ghostly exhortations to remove the effects,—such weeds must not be permitted to grow in a vineyard where you are the gardener; abuse

you must expect, but your reward will be great gain—go to his house and oblige him to come along with you to prayers."

Being thus advised, the parson, after a parting cup, withdrew and bought the bell.

Next morning, according to orders, his reverence went to the theatre, ringing his bell, and calling aloud, "Players, come to prayers! players, come to prayers!" Finding Hart's door open, he went in bawling, "Players, come to prayers." Hart came down in a violent passion, and demanded to know why he was so disturbed?

The parson replied, "Players, come to prayers!"

Hart, seeing no help, bridled his passion, and said, "that he wondered how a gentleman of his gown and seeming sense, could make himself so ridiculous." The parson looked at him with an eye of doubt, then rang his bell again, and bawled to the pitch of his voice, "Players, come to prayers!" Hart, in desperation, now began to swear; but the other informed him, "I have been told of your cursing and swearing and atheistical blasphemies; but, nevertheless, I will do my duty," and accordingly laid hands on Hart to drag him away, bawling, "Players, come to prayers!"

At this new absurdity, Hart began to suspect that his reverence was mad, or that some trick was played upon him, and asked him to walk into his room, when, after they had drunk a cup of sack together, the parson told the whole story of his engagement. The poor man was soon undeceived; the story, however, taking wings, reached the ears of King Charles, who was so mightily pleased with the joke, that he sent for Joe, and had him reinstated in the theatre.

But the adventure did not end here; for the parson

had a son who was accounted a great swordsman, a fighting, fiery, choleric, hectoring fellow, but, as such commonly are at bottom, as rank a coward as ever traduced his neighbour behind his back, and he swaggeringly vowed to revenge his father's wrongs.

He met Joe coming from the rehearsal one day, and desired him to draw; Joe demanded to know why, and they adjourned to a tavern that he might be informed. After learning the business, Joe agreed to give the satisfaction sought, but requested a short time to say his prayers, and retired to another room, where he prayed aloud that he might be forgiven for killing seventeen different persons in duels, and concluded by asking forgiveness for being obliged to add this unhappy gentleman to the catalogue! The other hearing him, and thinking his thread of life near its end, ran down stairs, and left Joe to pay the reckoning.

In the summer vacation Joe determined to turn mountebank, and set out with a retinue of tumblers, dancers, &c. for Hertford. He himself passed by the venerable name of Signore Salmatius, whose fame sounded not only in Italy, but in most parts of Europe, as he himself declared. On his arrival at Hertford he commenced business, and great was his practice, and great his applause; the invalids and curious of all ages flocking to him. But mortal greatness cannot continue long without change, and so Joe found; for whilst in the meridian of his glory, a doctor, no less famous than himself, vulgarly called the Unborn Doctor, came rattling into Hertford in a coach and six, with fine liveries and a long train of attendants, which caused Joe's practice to decline. But he was not to be beaten in this manner, so he ordered his stage to be removed to the same street and within three yards of

his opponent's, determined to have his share in the spectators if he could not obtain it in his practice; and as the Unborn Doctor came on his stage, Joe mounted on his, and abused him in the most vituperative terms. The doctor retaliated, and had the best of the argument; but Joe challenged him to come next market day, and upon the public stage to discuss a point of physic with him. The challenge was accepted, and they were attended with grand huzzas by the mob to their separate lodgings.

The day being come, a great flock assembled to hear this learned controversy; and the adversaries being on the stage, Joe proposed that each should mount a stool to be more conspicuous to the spectators; and this being agreed to, he commenced as follows:—

"Gentlemen, I thank you all for your good company, and hope that I shall thoroughly convince you, before you go, how grossly you have all been abused by this impostor, and that you will be so far from repenting of your coming hither, that I shall deserve your eternal thanks and prayers, for discovering those dangerous shelves and rocks the dear bark of your healths was in danger of splitting against. Gentlemen, I neither come hither to get a name nor an estate; the first, by my assiduous study and care and many miraculous cures performed in Spain, Italy, Genoa, Flanders, Holland, France, and England; nay, as I may boldly say, *per totum terrarum orbem*, has established that (thanks to my propitious stars!) many years ago. As to the latter, gentlemen, those kings and foreign princes who, by my skill, have been preserved and snatched from the dreadful hungry and gaping jaws of death, and whose images I have the honour to wear, (showing several medals) have sufficiently rewarded my care, and put me beyond any such occasion to follow my

profession for the lucre of gain at this time of day. But hearing how much the English nation was oppressed with the scurvy, gout, &c. I thought myself bound in duty, knowing my cures infallible, to come hither and relieve the distempered. Besides, gentlemen, I am the seventh son of a seventh son, so was my father before me, and my grandfather before him, all have remained seventh sons of seventh sons for near 200 years. To convince you that what I say is truth, I foresee that some heavy judgment will fall on the head of that impostor, which I pray Heaven may be shown here as an exemplary punishment. Lord grant that the impostor may fall, and the true doctor remain unhurt!"

At these words, and just as his opponent was beginning to stutter his answer, Joe's Merry-andrew, who was underneath the stage of his rival with a cord fastened to his stool, pulled it from under him, and down he tumbled. This decided the controversy. Joe was carried to his lodgings in triumph, and the other St. John Long was hooted out of the town with shame and disgrace.

Joe's fame was now waxen wide; but at length having been guilty of some misdemeanours, he was committed to prison. He was, however, after a time discharged; came to his London engagement, and entertained the audience with a prologue descriptive of his summer's grasshopping.

He sometime afterwards took a trip to Windsor, and entered himself with a company of strollers, who were in a deplorable condition, having acted all their small stock of plays, and those so often, that nobody would come to see them. At last Joe, on condition that he should have half the proceeds, undertook to fill the house.

The play of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* was given

out for acting by Joe, although not one in the company knew a word of it, and they had a full house; however, Joe was puzzled what excuse to offer for not playing as advertised, when he saw a lady of great note in the town coming to the theatre. He ran to her coach, told her that they had given out a play which could not be acted, as some of their company were indisposed, and entreated that her ladyship would be pleased to ask for any other, as the audience would be satisfied with whatever she commanded. This she promised to do; and Joe getting upon the stage, she called to him and asked what play was to be acted? He told her *The Merry Wives of Windsor;* to this she replied, that being fatigued with it in London she could not endure the thought of it, and besought him to oblige her by putting it off. Joe said, if the audience would please to accept of it, he would certainly oblige her ladyship in any thing, and accordingly the play was put off, and he got his money.

In the spring Joe went to Portsmouth with a company of strollers; but as they did not succeed, they all left the town except Joe, who was imprisoned for debt. He, however, made his escape, and went to the governor of the Isle of Wight, who entertained him at his own table, and mustered him as a soldier, but freed him from all duty and attendance, allowing him at the same time treble pay out of his own pocket. Joe soon after visited Portsmouth, and boasting how he had been entertained, the tale came to the governor's ears, who ordered a file of musqueteers to fetch him back, and threw him into durance, threatening to hang him for deserting. At this juncture, a new ambassador to Constantinople was forced to put in to the Isle of Wight by contrary winds,

and Joe was sent to him, unwilling, however, to leave England; but in the end he consented, and sailed for the Ottoman metropolis.

The ambassador died on the passage. His lady and family returned, and on her way made some stay at Leghorn, where she presented Joe with the better part of her husband's wardrobe, and a handsome present in money. The money of course did not last long, and he was reduced to great want, when he met with an Englishman belonging to the Factory, who having known him at the play-house, invited him to his house, where Joe gave him a narrative of his misfortunes. Through this man he was introduced to dance before the Grand Duke of Florence, and had the honour to teach the young Prince and Princess. He afterwards rose to great importance, insomuch that whoever desired to obtain any favour of the Duke, could intercede with no fitter man to accomplish his desire. This begat him enemies, and he had more than one quarrel on the subject.

Joe, in teaching the Princess, however, was a little too familiar, but luckily for his head he made his escape to Rome; there he applied to the English agent, by whom he was well entertained, and became the delight of all companies. His holiness the Pope was immensely pleased with him, and had his picture drawn by one of the most celebrated Roman painters, holding the Pope's picture in his hand and smiling on it: at last weary of this greatness, he took his leave, and returned to England, where on reaching London, he waited on King James, had the honour to kiss his hand, and remained in favour during his reign; but after his abdication, Joe

turned precisian, wearing a plain band, and following the law under the name of an attorney. In this masquerade he continued some time; afterwards he preached among the Quakers, and returning to the stage, finished his career as an actor.

# ROBERT WILKS.

The life of Robert Wilks exhibits much of the ideal beauty of a player's character. It is romantic, abounding in instances of generosity, spirited, and eminently distinguished for shrewdness, in the midst of an apparently careless prodigality.

Daniel O'Bryan, who describes himself as his schoolfellow, says, that he was born in 1666, in Meath-street, in the liberty of the Earl of Meath, in Dublin; and that his father was a stuff-weaver by trade. But Bellchambers, in his edition of the *Life of Colley Cibber*, places him in a more eminent rank. "The ancestors," says he, "of this great comedian, were seated at Bromesgrove, in Worcestershire, where Judge Wilks, his grandfather, raised a troop of horse at his own expense for the service of Charles I., in whose cause the family suffered so much, that the father of Robert, with his wife, and the scanty remains of an ample fortune, removed to Dublin; near to which, at a place called Rathfarnham, the comedian was born, in the year 1670."

His father had several other children, but Robert was so remarkable above them all for the liveliness of his genius, that it was early determined to send him to the university, and to educate him for the church. Pursuant to this resolution, he was accordingly placed in the grammar-school, where he made some progress, and had a

writing-master to attend him thrice a week. On a sudden, however, he took an antipathy to classical studies, but adhered so closely to his penmanship, that in less than two years he was said to be qualified for any employment that required elegant writing.

This distaste at his studies greatly grieved his father; who, finding remonstrance unavailing, submitted to the misfortune, and by dint of good interest, procured for him the situation of a clerk in the office of the Irish Secretary at War. Here Robert for some time conducted himself with great assiduity, but the sprightliness of his character could not be repressed. By frequenting the theatre, and associating himself with the actors, his official duties became "stale, flat, and unprofitable," in his eyes; and he resolved to be a player. Instead of following his official business, he spent most of his time, when at his desk, in reading plays and amorous comedies, and his leisure in making love to a neighbour's daughter, whom he soon persuaded to a clandestine marriage.

She lived with her father until the fruits of their intercourse could no longer be concealed, when the old man taxing her with her appearance, she confessed her marriage with Robert Wilks. He was so enraged at her imprudence, that, after rebuking her in the severest manner, he turned her immediately out of doors, and kept from her all her apparel, notwithstanding that her mother interceded for her with the most earnest affection.

From her father's she went directly to the office of the Secretary at War in the Castle, and with swollen eyes and a heart bursting with grief, described the scene which had taken place to her husband. The news naturally affected him deeply; but making a virtue of necessity, he comforted her as well as he could, and con-

veyed her from the office to his father's house in Meath-street, where they were kindly received by his mother, who was at first inexpressibly surprised at hearing of the marriage, and strongly expressed her apprehensions that his father would not easily be reconciled to it, but promised to use her utmost efforts to effect a reconciliation. It came to pass as she expected; when Mr. Wilks was informed of what had taken place, he was extremely incensed at the thoughtlessness of his son, nor could all the entreaties of his wife pacify him, or even prevail with him to suffer the young couple to stay one night in his house.

O'Bryan has neglected to mention the age of Robert when this disclosure happened; but it would seem, from the degree of public interest which the affair excited, that he must have been then very young. Whether the rash lovers deserved the severity with which they were treated by both their fathers, may admit of some controversy. Robert, it is true, had been heedless in his duty; in short, one of those spruce youths who wear their hats a little on the one side, and affect more of a rakish air than the degree of their delinquency exactly justifies. But his imprudent wedding seems to have been his only serious offence, and there is no imputation whatever on the young woman. The character of the two mothers affords a pleasing contrast of maternal affection, opposed to the relentless severity of the fathers. Old Mrs. Wilks, before the dejected couple left the house, took an opportunity of putting three pistoles into the hands of her son, unknown to his father, exhorted him to use his wife with tenderness and care, and promised to do all that lay in her power to appease her husband and to assist them.

Misfortunes never come singly, and so it fared with these loving and afflicted young creatures. So soon as Wilks returned to his office, the Secretary sent for him, and said that he had been informed he so often neglected his duty it could no longer be endured, and therefore he was dismissed and another placed in his room. The coincidence of this calamity with the rejection and disappointments he had already suffered that day, if altogether accidental, is singular, and appears to have almost overwhelmed Wilks. Misery lent him eloquence; and he represented to the Secretary his wretched circumstances and indigent condition with such effect, that although he was not restored to his place, a quarter's salary was immediately paid to him.

The situation of Wilks and his wife, after this interview with the Secretary at War, cannot be contemplated without sorrow, nor was their conduct undeserving of respect and pity. In returning to the house where he had placed his wife, he resolved to conceal from her the loss he had sustained, under an apprehension that, in her condition, and after the agitation she had already endured, the disconsolate tidings might prove fatal. But when she heard the news, she submitted to her lot with firmness and magnanimity, deploring the misfortune more on his account than her own, and endeavouring to cheer him with the hope that, in time, their distress and the mediation of friends might prevail with their parents to receive them again into favour. But it was a fallacious fancy. Their fathers were inexorable, and the dismissal of our hero from his office only served to exasperate old Mr. Wilks still more against him, insomuch that he declared to his wife, if ever she went near the miserable pair,

or gave them any assistance, without his consent, a separation would certainly ensue between themselves.

This unnatural severity became the common discourse of Dublin, and reaching the ears of a Mr. Cope, a respectable goldsmith, he informed his wife that, with her approbation, he would take the young unfortunates into his house. Mrs. Cope, a woman of great gentleness and compassion, joyfully encouraged her husband's charitable intent; and telling him that no time ought to be lost in such a case, they went immediately in quest of the sufferers, and having found where they lodged, brought them forthwith in a coach to their own house. Here they entertained them for two years, during which Mrs. Wilks had two children, and as much care was taken of the family as if Mr. Wilks had been the son of his hospitable friends. Perhaps fiction affords few incidents more romantic than these; and the natural generosity of the human heart is vindicated by the contrast of characters in this little drama of real life.

In the mean time our hero had no resource but the stage, his propensity to which, and the tinge which dramatic reading had given to his imagination, had been the original cause of his embarrassments. Being well acquainted with the actors, he offered himself to the theatre. In January 1689 he made his first appearance as Othello, and was received with universal applause. He was not, however, altogether a novice in the art; he had previously acted, in private, the Colonel, in Dryden's *Spanish Friar*, and acquitted himself with considerable éclat. It is therefore probable that, in the worst of his distress, his buoyant animal spirits derived support from day-dreams of theatrical success, and that he suffered less in the

midst of his humiliation and misery, than such a state of circumstances was likely to have produced on a mind less adventurous.

His appearance in Othello was followed by an engagement; but his salary was small, not exceeding twenty shillings per week. Next year the range of his characters was extended, and his weekly salary was augmented to thirty shillings. But the troubles in Ireland occasioning many Protestant families to quit that kingdom and seek refuge in England, the players were obliged to give over acting, and Wilks was advised, by an actor of the name of Richards, to try the London boards, where Betterton, with whom Richards was acquainted, had then great influence.

He accordingly communicated his intention to Mr. Cope and his wife, who were very unwilling to part with him; but perceiving his inclination daily increasing, they refrained from opposing his intention, and united their endeavours to enable him to accomplish his journey with his family in comfort. They applied on his behalf to his father with so much effect, that they prevailed on him to give twenty guineas. Mr. Cope himself not only gave him a release for all the expenses incurred by keeping his family, but made Mrs. Wilks a present of five guineas at her departure. But her father would listen neither to affection nor to charity: he not only refused to give her one shilling, but with rage, amounting almost to insanity, cursed her with the bitterest imprecations, and wished that her life might be one continued scene of misery.

It is difficult to account for such inordinate and unnatural fury, for there had been nothing very criminal in her conduct. It would, therefore, seem, that the harsh-hearted choleric old man was instigated against her more

by that strange revulsion of nature, which makes some minds regard with hatred, and as adversaries, those whom they have too hardly treated or injured. Mrs. Wilks, a gentle and piously-disposed young creature, endured his resentment and contumely with uncomplaining meekness, and was constant in her devotion in praying for the welfare of her parents, and for their conversion to better feelings; for her mother, in the end, had proved as rigid as her father, and even, it is said, goaded him against her.

Furnished with letters from the veteran Richards to Betterton, Wilks and his family embarked for England. They had a quick and prosperous voyage to Parkgate, and as soon as they had refreshed themselves, they hired horses and came to West Chester, where they continued four or five days, and were handsomely entertained by the Irish nobility, then settled as refugees in that city. From thence they came in the stage-coach to London; and on his arrival, Wilks presented himself to Betterton, and was received into the Drury-lane company at a salary of only fifteen shillings per week. His business, as Cibber relates, was insignificant; the characters he had sustained in Dublin were all in the possession of performers of greater name.

Lycippus, in the *The Maid's Tragedy*, was the part in which he first appeared, and the best he was permitted to assume. His merit in it appears, however, to have been, considering the part, distinguished. Betterton, who performed *Melantius*, having occasion to address him in extenuation of the King's death, did so with such dignity, that Wilks could hardly muster courage enough to make the proper replies; but there was something so interest-

ing in his diffidence, that the veteran said to him,—"Young man, this fear does not ill become you; a horse that sets out at the strength of his speed will soon be jaded." And Dryden, as well as Sir George Etheridge, Wycherley, Congreve, and all the wits of the age, were soon of opinion, that he would, in the course of a few years, become the best comedian that had ever graced the English stage.

O'Bryan says, that he continued almost three years in London, and played low parts in comedy, till meeting with Ashbury, who had come from Dublin to make up a company for the theatre in that city, he engaged himself to him, and so returned to Ireland. Bellchambers, on the other hand, says, that he remained in London but one winter; during which, his first wife having died, he married a lady of respectable connexions, and with her, on a refusal from the manager to raise his salary, he departed for Dublin. But in this matter I am inclined to believe O'Bryan's account the most correct: it was during his second visit to London that his second marriage was celebrated.

It would seem that Ashbury had formed a correct estimate of the talents and capacity of Wilks, and took particular pains to instruct him in every part he played, till he prevailed upon him to attempt the character of *Alexander the Great*, to which Wilks consented with great reluctance, declaring that his taste and power rendered him unfit for tragic parts. His performance obtained much applause, but his exertions in the dying-scene were so vehement, that they threw him into a fever, which put a stop to the run of the tragedy, as it had very nearly done to his life. During this interval the friendship of Ashbury was unceasing; he procured

for him the best medical attendance, and defrayed the expenses from his own purse.

It was soon after this that Wilks formed an acquaintance with the ingenious George Farquhar, whose diverting comedies and melancholy life have never ceased to amuse and interest the dramatic reader. By the mediation of Wilks he was admitted into the Dublin Theatre, where failing of success, his friend, who was sensible of his talents, advised him to relinquish that mode of life, and to write for the stage. "It is not here, in Ireland," said he, "that you can expect encouragement adequate to your merits. I would, therefore, advise you to go to London." But Farquhar was in no condition to undertake such a journey, and he ingenuously laid open his unhappy circumstances to Wilks, who recollecting the misfortunes he had himself suffered, with a generosity far beyond his own means, made him a present of ten guineas, and promised to use his interest with Ashbury, the manager, to let him have a benefit play. Ashbury, a man of kind and munificent dispositions, readily complied with Wilks's request, and not only granted the benefit, but complimented Farquhar with the charges of the house. This enabled the unfortunate poet to carry the advice of his friend into effect. The next day he embarked for London.

Such instances of generosity ought to redeem many faults. Wilks's gaiety of humour was without that carelessness of others' feelings which is too often associated with light-heartedness; nor does his life afford any support to the opinion of the satirist, that those who have themselves drunk deeply of distress, are apt to look with disgust, rather than with pity, on the sufferings of others.

Wilks continued in Ireland about two years after the departure of his friend Farquhar, and the occasion which then induced him to leave Dublin was one of the most interesting incidents of his life. If the story which broke off his intercourse with Ashbury, to whose kindness he had been so much indebted, was founded in truth, it is impossible to withhold from his conduct the reproach of the basest ingratitude as well as of profligacy; but if we adopt the account of his friends, it will be equally impossible to refuse him the praise of manliness and candour.

Mrs. Ashbury was much younger than her husband, and in her person elegant and beautiful. She played the principal parts in genteel comedy with Wilks, and a report was soon spread abroad that their private rehearsals were distinguished for more than professional ardour. Such was the esteem in which Ashbury held Wilks, and such his confidence in the character of his wife, that he long disregarded the rumour. It was, however, repeated so often to him, that he at last began to suspect there might be some foundation for it, and he became in consequence uneasy, sometimes peevish, and reflected with chagrin that he was himself older than his wife by many years, while Wilks, in the prime of life, possessed a person and manners highly calculated to engage a woman's fancy.

Wilks was vexed that Ashbury should entertain any derogatory opinion of him, and one day inquired, with decision and frankness, if he had ever given him, by word or action, any cause to think he could be guilty of such base ingratitude to him, who had laid him under so many obligations of honour and friendship? To this appeal the

jealous husband answered sternly—" I *hope* you have not been so perfidious."—" Sir," continued the other, " as you have known the world many years longer than I have done, I was in great hope that you would have been so far your own friend as not to give credit to idle and groundless reports. Rumour is a common liar, and if the tittle-tattle of the multitude shall be admitted as a sufficient proof, whose reputation is safe? I declare myself innocent, and am willing to give you the most convincing satisfaction that I am incapable of such unworthiness, while I shall esteem myself happy if I can restore your former tranquillity and peace of mind."—" That is not in your power," said Ashbury. " I wish it could be done; but the arrow is lodged too deep ever to be drawn out."—" Then, Sir," replied Wilks, " since you are obstinately bent not to suffer any means to be used which may remove your uneasiness, I can only promise you, that in a very little time I shall put it out of the power of malice to say that you shall disquiet yourself for the future on my account."

Mrs. Ashbury was a woman of many excellent qualities, uncommon piety, charity, and good-nature, virtues not then common among the ladies of the theatre. She was punctual in her devotions, and did not fail to receive the sacrament once in every month. One day, soon after the above conversation, and in the hope of removing the groundless jealousy of her husband, she delivered a paper into the hands of the minister at the communion-table, asserting her innocence, and declared the contents to be true. The clergyman showed the paper to Ashbury, who read it with visible emotion; but still it had not the desired effect; and his wife perceiving his jealousy unsa-

tisfied, requested permission to retire from the theatre. With this he refused to comply, for he well knew that the stage could not be supported without her.

Soon after, Wilks came to him one morning, gave up all his parts, and informed him that in the course of a week he intended to set out for England. Ashbury was overwhelmed with the news, and used all his rhetoric to dissuade him from such a design; and when he found that he could not prevail, he called his wife, and desired her to use her interest and influence to induce him to continue with them.

If any thing could have altered the determination of Wilks, these earnest solicitations would have done it; but he soon convinced the Ashburys that their entreaties were unavailing, by producing letters from the theatre in London, showing that he had already made proposals to rejoin the company there, and that they had been accepted. However, at the intercession of Mrs. Ashbury, he stayed in Dublin until some of the other actors had got up his parts, and a benefit was over, which Ashbury, notwithstanding what had taken place between them, obliged him to accept.

Upon a transaction in its nature and management so romantic, we might pause to offer some reflections, but considering the alleged licentiousness of the players' characters in those days, we refrain. In truth, the manner in which O'Bryan talks of Wilks on this occasion, forces us to recollect the excuse of the French actress when the purity of her virtue was called in question. "I will not deny," says O'Bryan, "that as he was a man of gallantry, so he had some amours, though very few."—"Well," said Mademoiselle, when reproached, "I acknowledge that I had a child, but it was a very little one!"

His return to Drury-lane was in the year 1696, where he was received with open arms by Betterton, then the manager. The first part he acted was Roebuck, in *Love and a Bottle*, written by his friend Farquhar. The second was Palamede, in *Marriage à la Mode*, in which his merits were so eminent that he was established at once in the esteem of all the town. The third appearance was as Sir Harry Wildair, in *The Trip to the Jubilee*, a character which Farquhar drew on purpose for him, and which he performed with such easy, gentlemanly negligence, that he gained universal applause, and had a run in it of two-and-fifty nights, amply satisfying every expectation of the author.

Wilks, in coming to England, expected to succeed Mountford, an actor recently dead, who had shone with particular brilliancy in gay characters; but upon his arrival, he found Powell already in possession of all his chief parts. Powell, however, treated him with apparent liberality, by offering him the choice of any of the parts in which he thought fit to make his appearance. This was a sinister favour, and intended to hurt him by exposing him to a comparison with the mellowed maturity of Powell; but Wilks was so far on his guard; he accepted only a part which Powell had himself played, but in which Mountford had never acted: it was that of Palamede. Whatever fame had preceded him from Ireland, where he was greatly admired, Cibber says, "that in this part he appeared but a raw actor as compared with Powell, and missed a good deal of the loose humour of the character which the other more happily hit; but he was young, erect, of a pleasing aspect, and on the whole gave the town and the stage sufficient hopes of him."

Upon the success of Wilks, the pretended contempt

which Powell had held him in soured into open jealousy. He now plainly saw that he was a formidable rival, and saw, too, that other people were of that opinion, and accordingly deemed it necessary to oppose and be troublesome to him. Wilks was as jealous of his fame as the other, and they soon came to a rupture. A challenge ensued, but it happened to come from Powell when his head was heated with wine, which was too often the case, so that next morning, when it was cooled, he allowed the affair to end in Wilks's favour. Powell, indeed, discovered, that it was not by intimidation he could acquire an ascendency over his rival, for when Wilks was provoked he would really give battle; so that after some farther altercations, he lost his temper, cocked his hat with a swagger, and in his passion walked off to the opposition company in Lincoln's-inn-fields.

Although, in voice and ear, Nature had been more kind to Powell, yet he so often lost the value of them by unheedful confidence, that the constant care and propriety of Wilks soon left him far behind in public esteem and approbation. His memory was not less tenacious than that of Wilks; but he put too much trust in it, and idly deferred the study of his parts, as clever schoolboys do their exercises, to the latest moment. Wilks never lost an hour, and was, in all his parts, perfect to such exactitude, that, in forty years, he rarely changed or misplaced an article in any one of them. Such uncommon diligence was adding to the gifts of nature all that is in the actor's power. "I have been astonished," says Cibber, "to see him swallow a volume of froth and insipidity in a new play, that we were sure could not live above three days, though it had been recommended to the stage by some good person of quality." So indefa-

tigable, indeed, was the diligence of Wilks, that he seemed to love his profession as a good man does virtue, for its own sake. In a new comedy, he once happened to complain of a crabbed speech in his part, which gave him more trouble to study than all the rest, and he applied to the author to soften or shorten it. The dramatist, that he might make the matter quite easy to him, fairly cut it all out; but when Wilks went home from the rehearsal, he thought it such an indignity to his memory that any thing should be deemed too hard for him, that he actually made himself perfect in that speech, though he knew it was never to be spoken.

Soon after his first appearance in Sir Harry Wildair, he became acquainted with three young gentlewomen, dress-makers, the daughters of a Captain Knapton of Southampton, who left a competent estate to his eldest son, and respectable fortunes to his other children. Through some mismanagement, not imputed to themselves, these young ladies were obliged to work for a livelihood. One of them Wilks married, and they had several children.

Upon the death of Mrs. Mumford, her parts were given to Mrs. Rodgers, who was acknowledged to be a very good actress; but when Mrs. Oldfield appeared, Wilks, then one of the joint-managers of the Haymarket, thought fit to assign them over to the *debutante*. This was not done out of any pique to Mrs. Rodgers, nor partiality for Mrs. Oldfield, but simply because the latter was the better actress. The correctness of his judgment was in the end confirmed; but Mrs. Rodgers became so clamorously incensed at his injustice, as she deemed it, that she quitted the theatre, and went to the opposition party.

The town took her part, and believing she had been greatly injured, was so irritated against Mrs. Oldfield, that, as often as she offered to act in any of Mrs. Rodgers's parts, she was assailed with cat-calls, and the other sounds and missiles of damnation. This state of things continued for the space of three months. At last, a plan was devised to pacify and please the town, which had the desired effect.

It was so arranged, that the rival heroines should choose such parts as pleased them best, and whoever performed to the most advantage, of which the audience were to be the judge, should supply Mrs. Mumford's place. This proposal was so reasonable, that the nobility and gentry, who were in those days the patrons of the drama, came into it without hesitation; and Mrs. Oldfield having chosen the part of Lady Lurewell, in *The Trip to the Jubilee*, performed it with such tact and talent, that she gained the unanimous applause of the whole house. The next night was allotted to Mrs. Rodgers, and great interest was made in her behalf by her partisans; but whether she was conscious of her inability to equal Mrs. Oldfield, or was affected by some other cause, certain it is that, to the great mortification of her friends, she refused to be a competitor, and Mrs. Oldfield was, in consequence, honoured with the part, which she performed with great éclat. Thus ended a controversy which had kept the town, or at least the theatres, in an uproar for a quarter of a year.

The impartial conduct of the manager was highly approved, and his professional judgment duly appreciated by the public. The parts he played, and the reckless gaiety of his manner in them, were calculated to procure for him the character of a rake; but, although he

certainly was not altogether free from blemish, he was yet, for an actor of that period, well-conducted and prudent.

Though his talents lay principally in comedy, he played some parts in tragedy with great and merited applause, particularly Hamlet, and Mad Tom in *King Lear;* nor could any measure of applause pervert his modesty and good temper. His old friend Ashbury, coming to London to obtain a renewal of his patent for the Dublin Theatre, went privately to see him in *Hamlet;* and when the play was over, stepped behind the scenes, to compliment him on his success, and the improvement he had made. Wilks was extremely pleased to see his old master, for so he always called him, and engaged him to dine with him next day. When the cloth was removed, Ashbury desired Mr. Wilks to bring the part of Hamlet, and read it to him, which he accordingly did, and the old gentleman convinced him of no less than fifteen errors in one act. Wilks received the criticism with thankfulness, and he subsequently endeavoured to correct himself according to the hints of his old master.

It is clear enough, that the fame of Wilks stands lower with posterity than in his own time, when he was not considered merely as the fine gentleman of the stage, but possessed a high reputation for his tragic talents. Sir Richard Steele, in speaking of him as a tragedian, says, "To beseech gracefully, to approach respectfully, to pity, to mourn, to love, are the places wherein Wilks may be said to shine with the utmost beauty." And Davies, in his *Dramatic Miscellanies,* remarks, "that he understood the tender passions in a superior degree; and when, with those attributes, we combine his tall, erect person,

his pleasing aspect, and his elegant address, no unfavourable notion can be entertained of his fitness for many parts in tragedy. His *Prince of Wales* (Davies adds) was one of the most perfect exhibitions of the theatre. He threw aside the libertine gaiety of Hal with felicity, when he assumed the princely deportment of Henry. At the Boar's Head he was lively and frolicsome. In the reconciliation with his father his penitence was ingenuous, and his promises of amendment were manly and affecting. In the challenge with Hotspur his defiance was bold, yet modest, and his triumph over that impatient and imperious rebel was tempered by generous regret."

To the reader of *Henry the VIII.* the part of Buckingham may seem to be of little importance, but there is an affecting and quiet pathos in it which the actor of merit will not fail to make impressive. Wilks thought Buckingham entitled to his notice, and in the very first scene, the resentment borne by the character against Wolsey broke out in Wilks with an impetuosity not to be restrained; his action was vehement, and his step hurried; but when condemned, his demeanour was resigned and gentle, and his sorrow was dignified with the meekness of Christianity.

The Castalio of Wilks was long and justly admired. Indeed, it was said of him, in delicacy of address to ladies, he surpassed the best actors of his own time; and the charm of his manner in approaching Monimia at their first interview, was of the highest order of gentlemanly acting. His delight at the reconciliation in the second act, his rage and resentment in the third and fourth, and his tenderness and misery in the fifth, well en-

titled him to all the generous approbation with which he was uniformly received in that part.

In *Hamlet*, in speaking that impassioned soliloquy which discloses Hamlet's method to catch the conscience of the King, a passage too often negligently performed, and sometimes omitted, he displayed great power and warmth of disposition. But sometimes he exceeded in vehemence, and struck the judicious ear occasionally with something like dissonance. The soliloquy upon Death he spoke with a serene, melancholy countenance, and a grave despondency of action, in fine accordance with the philosophy of the sentiments. In the assumed madness with Ophelia, in which Garrick was afterwards thought too boisterous, Wilks retained enough of covert insanity, but at the same time he preserved the feelings of a lover, and the delicacy of a prince. The critics blamed him for his behaviour to the Ghost in the first act, but his conduct towards it with his Mother in the third could not be censured. His action in that great scene was a happy mixture of indignation allayed by tenderness, and his whole deportment was lofty and graceful. When he presented the pictures, his reproaches were guarded with filial reluctance; and when he came to the pathetic exclamation—"Mother, for love of grace!" there was something in his manner inexpressibly gentle, and yet powerfully persuasive.

His reputation, however, chiefly rested on his parts in genteel comedy; and by all tradition, his representation of Sir Harry Wildair was the most splendid impersonation of the careless gaiety of a young man whose high spirits and plentiful fortune threw a gloss over the greatest extravagances, and has never been equalled on the stage. So powerful was the impression created by him in this

character, that Steele reprehends the audience for turning their attention to it while he was performing in other parts. In Lord Townly he has also been highly commended. In the scene where he felt himself reduced to the necessity of reproaching Lady Townly with her faults, his demeanour surpassed all praise, for he mixed a tenderness with his anger that softened into tears. "If the judgment of the crowd were infallible," says Cibber, "I am afraid we shall be reduced to allow that the *Beggar's Opera* was the best written play, and Sir Harry Wildair, as Wilks played it, the best acted part that ever our English theatre had to boast of."

In the year 1708, some disagreements had arisen between the actors and the managers that caused an appeal to the Lord Chamberlain; and in consequence of his interposition, Swiny, who was then sole director of the Opera, received permission to enter into a private treaty with such of the actors in Drury-Lane as might be thought fit to head a company, under their own management, and to be sharers with him in the Haymarket. Those chosen for this charge were Wilks, Dogget, Mrs. Oldfield, and Colley Cibber.

From this time Wilks continued both to prosper as a man, and to improve as a player; but Cibber does not very highly commend him as a manager. He describes him as too fond of fame, and less solicitous for the pecuniary interests of the theatre than for the glory of the performance; and undoubtedly he makes these charges very clearly out. But still it should be recollected that it was during the period of Wilks's joint management that the English stage was conducted with the greatest success. Earlier epochs of the drama were distinguished for more poetic talent, and later times can boast of greater

splendour, tinsel, and scenery; but no period in the history of the British theatre can show more uniform success, more general talent of so high a level in the players, nor audiences more distinguished for good manners and intelligence. With this general remark we may conclude our narrative of the professional career of Wilks.

He, without question, must have been an actor of no common qualifications, but good sense and diligence did as much for him as his natural endowments. There was, however, a warmth about him as a man rarer than his genius and acquirements.

To enumerate his generous and charitable actions, would be an endless task; but his uniform friendly conduct towards poor Farquhar is justly entitled to be recorded, both for its disinterestedness, its constancy, and its liberality: on one occasion, at the close of Farquhar's unhappy life, it was kind to tenderness.

The Earl of Orrery, who was then a great patron as well as master of learning, observing how little attention was paid to the merits of Farquhar, made him a present of a Lieutenant's commission in his own regiment, which the dramatist held for several years. Being then induced to solicit the Duke of Ormond for preferment, he was promised by his Grace a captaincy then vacant, and authorized to dispose of his lieutenancy. Farquhar, not doubting the sincerity of the Duke, sold his commission, and summoning his creditors together, paid off their bills. By this honest proceeding he had left himself almost pennyless, but still confiding in the honour of the Duke, he frequently waited on his Grace to remind him of his promise. At last, the Duke told him one morning that the commission had been given to another gentleman at the instigation of the Colonel, but added, that if he would

attend him to Ireland, (for he was then appointed Lord Lieutenant,) he would give him the first company of foot or troop of dragoons that became vacant. Farquhar, who was naturally of a tender constitution and a sensitive heart, was greatly depressed by this disappointment; he bewailed the unhappy hour in which he disposed of his commission, and having spent the little residue of the money which remained, after paying his debts, he had nothing left to support himself and his family. Mr. Wilks one day missed him, and wondering at his absence, went to his lodgings, and found him overwhelmed with grief and despair. He inquired into the cause, and Farquhar related every thing that had passed between the Duke and him, adding, that what gave him the greatest concern was his apprehension of having lost the Earl of Orrery's favour by parting with his commission.

Wilks endeavoured to cheer him, by representing that the Earl was a man of so much honour, that he would not show nor even harbour in his breast any resentment upon that account, especially as the fault, if any had been committed, ought to be laid at the door of the Duke of Ormond. He then gave him his best advice in his kindest manner, and said there was but one way left for him to pursue, viz. "Write a play, and it shall be got up with all imaginable expedition."

"Write!" cried Farquhar, starting from his chair, "is it possible that a man can write common sense who is heartless and has not one shilling in his pocket?"

"Come, come, George," replied Wilks, "banish melancholy, draw your drama, and bring the sketch with you to-morrow, for I expect you to dine with me. But as an empty pocket may cramp your genius, I desire you

to accept my mite," and he presented him with twenty guineas.

When Wilks was gone, Farquhar retired to his study, and drew up the plot of *The Beaux Stratagem*, which he delivered to Wilks next day, and the design being approved, he was desired to proceed and not to lose a day with the composition. This comedy, which is one of the best extant, was begun, finished, and acted in the space of six weeks; but too late, with all that haste, for the advantage of the author. On the third night, which was for his benefit, Farquhar died of a broken heart.

Another anecdote of a different kind showed that the good-nature and liberality of Wilks was not confined to objects of compassion or of friendship. He originated the proposal, by which a benefit was granted to assist the parish of St. Martin-in-the-Fields to rebuild their church; and the splendid Corinthian fabric that has been so long one of the principal ornaments of the metropolis, still stands a monument of dramatic munificence. There is something singularly ridiculous in making the play-house a coadjutor of the church. It is subversive of all our established notions—accustomed to say with De Foe,

> "Where'er the Lord erects a house of prayer,
> The Devil 's sure to build a chapel near."

But we must go no farther, for in this case, and even in these days of decadence, we fear it must be said,

> "It will be found, upon examination,
> That Satan has the largest congregation;"

for whether the preachers are in fault, or the players more attractive, certainly St. Martin's-in-the-Fields cannot boast of being too greatly frequented.

Among other of the many instances of Wilks's kind-heartedness, we should not forget his liberality to the wretched Savage. The life and miseries of that unhappy poet are too well known to be related here, especially as I shall have occasion, in his own life, to speak both of the extraordinary source from which they arose, and the remarkable circumstances by which they were distinguished. In the shifts for shelter, to which this ill-fated man was reduced, he was sometimes obliged to take a dog's bed among the scenes of the playhouse. When Wilks was made acquainted with this, and the many hardships he had undergone, he went to the reputed mother of Savage, and so represented his desolate state to her, that she was moved to give him sixty guineas; at the same time, she assured Wilks that Savage was not, indeed, her son; that he was palmed upon her for the child which she had put out to nurse, and that she could never acknowledge him as hers; but as this is a point which Dr. Johnson, in his celebrated life of Savage, has disingenuously slurred over, we shall, in the proper place, treat of that particular more at large.

The second Mrs. Wilks having followed her predecessor, Wilks married again; and even in his third marriage he was as much ruled by affection, and as disinterested, as in the former two. The lady was a gentlewoman in Westminster, whose narrow circumstances compelled her to work with her needle, to support herself and family. Wilks having bought some holland for shirts, desired one of his acquaintance to get them made by a good sempstress, and it happened that they were given to this respectable person. When half a dozen were finished, they were delivered to Wilks, who was so well pleased with the niceness of the work, that he requested

the gentlewoman might herself bring the remainder to his lodgings. This she did, and from that day he looked upon her as the only woman that could then make him happy; and, accordingly, he courted her in the most honourable manner.

A little time after their marriage, one of his acquaintance asked what could induce him, who had realized a plentiful fortune, to marry a woman who had none? The reply of Wilks was characteristic. "Sir, as Providence has been pleased to bless me with a competency sufficient to maintain myself and a family, could I do better than take to my arms one who wanted such a blessing? I assure you, that as love was the only motive that prompted me to marry the gentlewoman who is now my wife, the unhappy circumstances she was in shall not in the least diminish, but rather serve to increase my affection to her; and I am fully convinced, that as our love is reciprocal, there will be no room for complaint on either side. I shall look upon her children as my own; they shall not want anything that is necessary or convenient for them, nor am I under any apprehension of their not discharging a filial duty to me, since they have been educated in the best and most virtuous principles."

His affection for this lady, and his tender regard for her children, could scarcely be paralleled; and such was their gratitude towards him, that it was not easy to determine, whether her love or their esteem for him was the greatest. Indeed, in the midst of what we would almost call a rich vein of professional peculiarity, he was a man of many virtues and very estimable qualities.

He died on the 27th of September, 1732, and was

buried at midnight by his own order, to avoid ostentation, in the church of St. Pauls, Covent-garden, where a monument was afterwards erected to his memory. It appears by the age stated on his portrait, that his death took place in the sixty-seventh year of his age, but the reader will have observed, that there is a discrepancy of four years as to the period of his birth.

# NELL GWINN.

Eleanor Gwinn was the daughter of a tradesman in mean circumstances, who could not afford to bestow on her much education, but who took care to introduce her to as good company as possible, and to implant in her mind a sense of virtue and delicacy. At an early age she went to live with a widow lady, where a counsellor-at-law seeing her, was smitten with her beauty, and made love to her in rather a violent manner, but without success. This coming to the knowledge of the lady, who herself had a penchant for the lawyer, she became jealous, and ordered Nell to quit the house: she immediately did so, but met with a cold reception from her father, whose ear had been poisoned regarding her conduct by her mistress, by whom he was advised to send her into the country, to wean her from flattery and cure her of self-conceit, for which purpose the lady put ten guineas into his hand.

Her father believing the story, threatened to abandon her for ever, unless she consented to live with an aunt in Yorkshire. Our heroine, however, would not consent to go, but directed her attention towards the stage, on which, as she was remarkable for beauty and vivacity, she imagined her figure alone, without any theatrical requisites, would enable her to suc-

ceed; or, at least, if she could not wear the buskin with success, she apprehended no objection to her appearing as a lady in waiting, or one of the maids of the bedchamber to the queens of the stage.

Animated with these fancies, she conceived one of the boldest schemes a girl of her education could possibly imagine. She left her father's house, took a genteel lodging, and as her appearance was elegant, she passed as a young lady just come from the country. In this retirement she applied herself to the reading of plays, and having a little money arising from her wages, and ten guineas from her lover the lawyer, she went often to the play, and took in as many ideas of theatrical action as she could possibly treasure in her mind. After living a month or two in this manner, she wrote a letter to Betterton, inviting him to her lodgings, and disclosing her scheme of coming on the stage. When Betterton had heard her recitation, he advised her to give up all idea of becoming a performer, though he admitted her genius lay that way.

Her scheme being so far frustrated, and her money greatly diminished, she began to be alarmed lest poverty should overtake her. Her resolution to appear on the stage was, however, none daunted. She quitted her gay apartments, dressed herself as an orange-girl, and went to the playhouse to follow the occupation. Her beauty soon drew attention; the eyes of the players and of those sparkish gentlemen who frequent the theatre were fixed upon her, and their ears became greedy to hear the story and birth of the handsome orange-girl.

Betterton soon discovered her, and astonished at her resolution, began to form better expectations of one whose propensity to the stage was so violent as to ex-

cite her to appear in so low a character for the sake of acquiring instruction. He advised her to follow her bent, and appointed one of his subalterns to initiate her in the principles of acting. This player became enamoured of her, but she rejected his proposals. He however prevailed upon her to quit the profession of orange-selling.

One day, when she was seeing her instructor perform the part of Creon in Dryden's *Œdipus*, her old lover, the Counsellor, in all the splendour of a consummate beau, came into the same box, and annoyed her ear with a repetition of his protestations. She heard him with indifference. He, however, resolved at all hazards to make her his own, and accordingly seized her as she came out of the theatre, hurried her into his chariot, and drove off for Richmond.

Half a year elapsed before Nell made any public figure again; but through the influence of her friend the Counsellor, she next season made her entry on the stage with very great éclat, not so much as a fine actress, however, as a fine woman; for though she certainly had a violent passion for the stage, her mediocrity as an actress shows the great difference between propensity and genius. She was never remarkable—her forte lay in speaking epilogues, and in exposing characters of vanity, with an air of coquetry and levity.

"The orange-basket her fair arm did suit,
Laden with pippins and Hesperian fruit;
This first step raised, to the wond'ring pit she sold
The lovely fruit, smiling with streaks of gold.
Fate now for her did its whole force engage,
And from the pit she mounted to the stage;

> There in full lustre did her glories shine,
> And long eclips'd spread forth their light divine;
> There Hart and Rowley's soul she did ensnare,
> And made a King* a rival to a Play'r.

Such is Lord Rochester's account. Langbaine, in his characters of the Dramatic Poets, tells us, that she spoke a new prologue to Beaumont and Fletcher's *Knight of the Burning Pestle*. We find her afterwards acting the part of Queen Almahide in *The Conquest of Grenada*, Florimel in *The Maiden Queen*, Donna Jacintha in *The Mock Astrologer*, Valeria in *The Royal Martyr*. Besides the part of Valeria, she was appointed to speak the epilogue, in performing which she so captivated the King, who was present the first night of the play, that his Majesty, when she had done, went behind the scenes and carried her off.

But there is another version of the story. The King having gone to the play with the Duke of York as private gentlemen, they sat in the next box to Nell and her lover, a young nobleman; and as soon as the play was finished, Charles, the Duke, and the nobleman, retired with Nell to a tavern, where his Majesty, by his attentions, greatly annoyed her friend. When the reckoning came to be paid, the King, searching his pockets, found he had not money to discharge it, his brother was in the same situation, and Nell observed that she had got into the poorest company she had ever before been with at a tavern. The nobleman, however, paid the reckoning, and parted both with his money and his mistress.

No sooner had she risen in the King's favour, than her heart, naturally warm and generous, overflowed in acts of

* Charles II.

kindness. One of the greatest of our national monuments of benevolence owes its rise to her; and in consequence, it is said, to the following circumstance. One day, when she was rolling about town in her carriage, a poor man soliciting charity, told her of his having been wounded in the Civil Wars in defence of the royal cause. Moved by his story, she considered it sad to think that wounds and scars, a stock for beggary, were often all the rewards that soldiers received for defending their country, and that it was great ingratitude on the part of the nation to suffer them to sink to such distress. She represented to the King the case of misery she had seen, and entreated him to permit some scheme to be proposed for alleviating the sufferings of those in old age, whose wounds and infirmities rendered them unfit for service. This idea she also communicated to persons of distinction, who were public-spirited enough to encourage it, and Chelsea Hospital was the result.

Of all King Charles's mistresses, Nell Gwinn was undoubtedly the least offensive to the contending parties in the State. She never sided with either; raised no enemies by her ambition, and lost no friends by her insolence. So far was she, indeed, from drawing aside the King from his affairs, that she often excited him to diligence.

One day, when he had been struggling in the council, and torn to pieces by the multiplicity of petitions for redress, the behaviour of his ministers, and the contentions of the Parliament, he retired very pensively to her apartment. Seeing his distress, she inquired the cause. "Oh, Nell, what shall I do," was his exclamation, "to please the people of England? they tear me to pieces."

"If it please your Majesty," said she, "there is but one way left."

"What is that?"

"Dismiss your ladies, and mind your business: the people of England will soon be pleased."

This observation, the truth of which the King could not but acknowledge, struck him, but he never in his life had resolution enough to discharge one mistress, however disagreeable to the nation, or expensive to himself.

During the troubles between his son the Duke of Monmouth, and the Duke of York, his Majesty, who loved both his son and brother, behaved with so much indifference and negligence in the business, that it was with great difficulty he could be persuaded to attend the council, or dispatch any affair whatever. One day, when the council had met and waited long for him, a member came to his apartments, but was refused admittance. His Lordship complained to Nell of this dilatoriness, upon which she wagered him a hundred pounds, that the King would that evening attend the council.

Accordingly she sent for Killigrew, naturally a buffoon, but a free favourite with his Majesty, and desired him to dress himself in every respect as if for a journey, and enter the King's apartments without ceremony. As soon as his Majesty saw him: "What, Killigrew! are you mad? Why, where are you going? Did not I order that nobody should disturb me?"

"I don't mind your orders, not I," said Killigrew; "and I am going as fast as I can."

"Why? where?" said his Majesty—"where are you going?"

"Going! why to hell," said Killigrew.

"To hell, and what to do there?"

" To fetch back Oliver Cromwell, to take some care of the national concerns, for I am sure your Majesty takes none."

This expedient had the desired effect, for the King immediately went to council.

That his Majesty had a great regard for Nell appears strongly in his last moments, when he desired his brother not to let " poor Nell starve."

After the death of Charles she fell into obscurity; the bustle at court, the political cabals, the contentions between the popish and protestant interests, quite engaged the attention of the public, and she was lost sight of. For the remainder of her life she lived in retirement, and in that situation there is no account of her.

She was undoubtedly possessed of generous and distinguished talent; united wit, beauty, and benevolence; and if she deserve blame for impurity, there are few who can claim encomiums for such eminent virtues.

## WILLIAM MOUNTFORT.

The history of William Mountfort belongs more properly to human nature than to that of the stage, for his chief celebrity arose from actions more remarkable than those of the histrionic art. He was born in 1660—the Biographia Britannica says 1659, and died in 1692, in the thirty-third year of his age. It is of little consequence which is the right date of his birth, especially in a work that lays more stress upon events, than on dates of births or burials.

He appears to have made his first appearance on the stage about the year 1682, and his rise was rapid. In 1685 he was chosen for the hero of Crown's "Sir Courtly Nice," and his performance of the part was esteemed honourable to his talents and judgment. His last new character was in Dryden's *Cleomenes,* in which, besides speaking the prologue, he acted the part of Cleanthes.

In person he was tall, well made, fair, and of an agreeable aspect; his voice clear, full, and melodious; and in tragedy he obtained great admiration as a lover. His address had a delightful recommendation in it from the natural tones of his voice; and of his words it is said,

"Like flakes of feather'd snow,
They melted as they fell."*

* A bad imitation by Dryden, in the Spanish Friar, of the effect of Ulysses' speech in the Iliad.

Mountfort was particularly renowned for his performance of one scene in *Alexander*, when he throws himself at the feet of Statira for pardon of his past infidelities. In it he displayed the great, the tender, the penitent, the despairing, the transported, and the amiable in the highest perfection. In comedy he was what is justly called the fine gentleman. In scenes of gaiety he never violated the respect due to the presence of an equal or superior, though inferior actors were in the parts. His only endeavour for attention was by true and masterly touches. He never laughed at his own jest but when the business of the scene rendered it necessary, and he had a particular talent in saying brilliant things in a lively manner. The wit of the poet was sharpened by his delivery. It is said that the agreeable was so natural to him, that even in the dissolute character of Rover, he seemed to wash off the guilt from the vice and to give it charms and merit.

He had, besides, a variety in his genius which few actors have aspired to. He could entirely change himself; could throw off the man of sense and assume the brisk, vain, rude and lively coxcomb, the flashy pretender to wit, and the dupe of his own sufficiency. Of this talent he gave many amusing instances, particularly in Sparkish, in *The Country Wife*. In that of Sir Courtly Nice he was still more eminent; there the whole man was altered, and Mountfort was forgotten in his part. The insipid, soft civility, the elegant and formal mien, the drawling delicacy of voice, the stately flatness of his address, and the empty eminence of his attitudes, exhibited the highest merit that can be looked for in an actor. But he was cut off in the very middle of his career; and connected with the story are several curious circumstances calculated at once to interest and appal.

A Captain Hill had made proposals of marriage to Mrs. Bracegirdle, which were declined, in consequence, as he supposed, of a more than Platonic attachment for Mountfort, and which at various times he threatened to revenge. Among Hill's associates was Lord Mohun, whose youth perhaps afforded some palliative for his share in the machination of debauchery to which Hill resorted. This nobleman engaged with him in a perfidious scheme for the abduction of Mrs. Bracegirdle, whom Hill proposed to carry off, and afterwards marry.

They arranged with an owner of hackney-coaches to provide a carriage and six horses to take them to Totteridge, and appointed him to wait with this conveyance at the Horse-Shoe tavern in Drury Lane. A party of soldiers were hired to assist in the exploit; and as Mrs. Bracegirdle, who had been supping at Mr. Page's in Prince's Street, was going down Drury Lane towards her lodgings in Howard Street, Strand, about ten o'clock at night, on Friday the 9th of December 1692, two of these soldiers pulled her away from Mr. Page, knocked her mother down, and tried to lift her into the carriage.

Her mother, upon whom the blow had providentially made but a slight impression, hung about her neck and detained her on the spot. While Page called for help, Hill ran at him with his sword drawn, and again endeavoured to get Mrs. Bracegirdle into the coach, but the alarm given by Page prevented him. Company came up, Hill insisted on seeing the lady home, and actually led her to the house in which she resided.

Lord Mohun, who during the scuffle was seated in the coach, joined Hill in Howard Street; the soldiers were dismissed, but the two friends, with swords drawn, paraded for about an hour and a half before Mrs. Bracegirdle's door.

Mrs. Brown, the landlady of the house where Mrs. Bracegirdle lodged, went out and expostulated with Lord Mohun and Hill, and then went, or sent, to Mountfort's house, to warn Mrs. Mountfort of the danger to which her husband was exposed. The watch, on going their round between eleven and twelve o'clock, found the two accomplices drinking wine in the street, a waiter having brought it to them from an adjacent tavern. Mrs. Brown, at this juncture, observed Mountfort turn into Howard Street, apparently coming towards her house, and hurried to meet him, and to mention his danger; but he would not stop, nor allow her time for the slightest communication.

On gaining the spot where Lord Mohun stood, Hill being a little farther off, respectfully saluted him, and was received with politeness. Lord Mohun then hinted that Mountfort had been sent for by Mrs. Bracegirdle, in consequence of her projected abduction: a charge immediately denied.

Mountfort then expressed a hope, with some warmth, that his Lordship would not vindicate Hill, who approaching in time to catch the substance of the remark, said hastily, he could vindicate himself, and gave him a blow, and challenged him to fight. They both went into the middle of the street, and after two or three passes, Mountfort was mortally wounded, and languished till the next day, when he expired.

Hill fled, and Mohun, on the 31st of January 1693, was tried by the House of Peers as an accomplice, and acquitted.

Without investigating the circumstances of this street brawl—this foul affair, it seems, though not quite relative to the matter, proper to mention, that although Lord Mohun was undoubtedly warmly attached to his friend, and

in many respects full of the lower kind of chivalric feeling, yet in few men was there ever an instance of more evident fatality. About seven years after his acquittal, he was tried again upon a charge of murder, from which he was also acquitted by his Peers. Ultimately, however, he died of his wounds, after killing a third, the Duke of Hamilton, in a duel.

## SAMUEL SANDFORD.

I CONSIDER the life of Samuel Sandford as affording a curious specimen of particular endowment. By the best accounts, he appears to have been a respectable comic actor; but it was in tragedy, and a special line, that he chiefly shone. All his contemporaries speak in high terms of his merits in dark parts, and there can be no doubt, that in some of them he displayed great force and dignity. He has been called the Spagnoletto of the stage, and was, beyond all comparison, excellent in disagreeable characters. As the chief pieces of Spagnoletto were of human nature in pain and agony, Colley Cibber says of Sandford, that "Upon the stage he was generally flagitious as a Creon in *Œdipus;* a Maligni in *The Villain*, a tragedy by Thomas Porter; an Iago in *Othello;* or a Machiavel in *Cæsar Borgia.* The painter might think the quiet objects of nature too tame for his pencil, and therefore chose to indulge its full power upon those of violence and horror." In Sandford it was endowment.

But distinguished as Sandford was in atrocious representations, it was not from choice, but on account of deformities which almost unfitted him for the stage. He was low and crooked, and so conspicuous were these bodily defects, that he could with no propriety be admitted into noble or amiable parts. The public

became so accustomed to see him in the line which Nature had marked out for him, that they would at last scarcely tolerate him in any other but a villain's character.

I have not ascertained the date of Sandford's birth, but he made his first appearance on the stage in 1663, under the auspices of Sir William Davenant. The first part for which he is mentioned is Sampson in *Romeo and Juliet;* he soon after sustained a minor part in *The Adventures of Five Hours;* and when Davenant produced his *Man's the Master*, he and Harris sung an epilogue in the character of two street ballad-singers. He was the Foresight in *Love for Love.*

When Betterton and his associates seceded to the new theatre in Lincoln's-inn-fields, he refused to join them as a partner, but they engaged him at a salary of three pounds a week.

The exact time of his death is not clearly known, but as he is not mentioned by Downs among the actors engaged to Swiney in the latter end of 1706, it is supposed that he died during the previous six years, for he certainly did exercise his profession in 1700.

His ancestors were long settled at Sandford, a village in Shropshire, and he prided himself in the superiority of his birth; but there was a Thomas Sandford, one of Shakspeare's fellow comedians, who has been supposed to be the grandfather of Samuel.

Perhaps it may be considered as one of the merits of this player's personal conduct, that very little is known of him out of his profession; for in the relation just made, all is comprehended that can be properly said of him as a man, and it is only as a player that we are left to regard

him. Indeed, the allusion to his pride of birth, would seem to imply that he kept himself aloof from the other actors; and Colley Cibber almost directly intimates, that he was regarded among them with some invidia. "It is not improbable," says he, "but that from Sandford's so masterly personating characters of guilt, the inferior actors might think his success chiefly owing to the defects of his person." And he proceeds to tell his readers, that it was much the fashion in King Charles the Second's time for stage bravoes and murtherers to make themselves as hideous as possible; a low artifice, which was carried to such extravagance, that the King himself, who was black-browed and of a swarthy complexion, once said of the murtherers in Macbeth, "What is the reason we never see a rogue in the play, but, godsfish! they always clap a black periwig upon him, when it is well known that one of the greatest rogues in England always wears a fair one." To whom the King alluded is not now known, but it must either have been a personal friend or foe.

In his performance Sandford acted so well, that he was ever identified with the part he performed, insomuch that the applause was often withheld from him which he justly merited, merely because the people had a repugnance to the part he so ably acted. But to some, and among others to his eulogist Cibber, Sandford always appeared the honester man in proportion to the spirit with which he exposed the wicked characters. This should uniformly have been the case; for it is the object and business of the stage to give pleasure; and when it carries its representation so far as to make them produce pain, it goes beyond its right and natural limit. In so far, therefore, as Sandford,

to the judicious spectator, gave only satisfaction, he must have been a great actor, and been essentially a contributor to the true and laudable use of the stage; even when he failed, he may be honestly called a theatrical martyr to poetical justice.

## MRS. ELIZABETH BARRY.

With whatever adventures the players in early life are distinguished, it is certain that, after they have once attained a footing in their profession, they are subject to fewer vicissitudes than the commonalty of mankind.

Mrs. Elizabeth Barry was the daughter of Edward Barry, Esq. a barrister of some eminence in the early part of the reign of Charles I., and who, in consequence of raising a regiment for the service of that Prince in the Civil Wars, was afterwards more generally known as Colonel Barry. By this proceeding, and the ill success which attended the royal cause, Mr. Barry was entirely ruined, and his children obliged to provide for their own maintenance. Lady Davenant gave to this daughter, Elizabeth, a genteel education, and made her a constant associate, by which the graces of her behaviour were essentially improved; and finally, in the year 1673, she was received into the Duke's company.

But her efforts at first were extremely unpropitious, insomuch that the managers deemed her totally incapable of making any adequate progress. At the end of the first year she was discharged among others who were thought to be a useless expense to it. When Cibber saw her first, she had not attained the celebrity she was destined to arrive at; but she had an august person, a fine understanding, and was at the time one of whom the world

was disposed to think well. Three times, according to Curl's History of the Stage, she was dismissed, as disappointing the expectations of her friends, and as often, by the interest of her benefactor, reinstated. When Otway produced his *Alcibiades*, her merit, however, was such, as not only to excite the attention of the public, but to obtain the author's most glowing applause. Next season she performed the lively character of Mrs. Lovit, in Etherege's *Man of Mode;* and, in 1680, her performance of Monimia, in the *Orphan* of Otway, seems to have raised her gradually to the highest eminence of her profession. The part of Belvidera, two years after, in *Venice Preserved*, and Isabella, in Southern's *Fatal Marriage*, in 1694, procured her universal distinction.

When Mrs. Barry first appeared, her only pretensions to notice were a good air and manner, and a powerful and pleasing voice. Her ear, however, was extremely defective, and several eminent judges despaired of her success; but still she regularly improved, and at last placed herself indisputably in the highest rank of her profession. In characters of greatness, she acquired high renown for elevation and dignity. "Her voice and motion," says Colley Cibber, "were superb and majestic —her voice full, clear, and strong; no violence of passion was too much for her; and when distress or tenderness possessed her, she subsided into the most affecting melody and softness." In the art of exciting pity, she enjoyed a power beyond all the actresses of her time. Gildon, in his Life of Betterton, says, "I have heard her say that she never uttered—

'Ah! poor Castalio!'

without weeping." In the gentle passions of Monimia

and Belvidera she has never been excelled. In scenes of anger, despair, and resentment, she was impetuous and terrible, and yet she poured forth the sentiment with the most enchanting harmony; but it was by the soft and gentle affections that she gained the enviable distinction of the "famous,"—at first applied to her in derision, but such were the fair merits of her endeavours, that it was affixed to her in compliment; and yet she was not, in many respects, a correct or an amiable woman. There is, for example, no reason to dispute her criminal intimacy with the Earl of Rochester; this much, however, may be said of her, that she fixed his affections more strongly than any other female. His letters addressed to Madame B——, first printed in the edition of his poems by J. Tonson, in 1716, are generally said to have been his Lordship's epistolary correspondence with this lady. In some of them he speaks with great fondness of a child he had by her, and to whom he afterwards, by will, left an annuity of forty pounds.

The temptations to which a popular actress is exposed are numerous and powerful; perhaps licentious vice, too, obtains an excuse readily among this class of persons; but they should recollect that the honours of triumph are always proportioned to the dangers of trial. There is no reason why the stage should not be as rich in virtue as the warmest friends of the profession desire to see it attain, and, therefore, we gladly draw a veil over the moral improprieties of Mrs. Barry, and would describe her deviations from chastity as more owing to her innate feelings than to her profession. Davies ascribes her death to the bite of a favourite lapdog, who had been seized, unknown to her, with madness. She died on the 7th of March, 1713, aged fifty-five years, and was buried in Acton church-yard.

## MRS. ANNE OLDFIELD.

As we bring the history of the stage downward, we find the actors begin to meet with formidable rivals in the actresses, and perhaps with few exceptions did they encounter one of more gaiety of heart than in the lady whose brief memoirs now claim our attention.

Anne Oldfield was born in the year 1683, and would, perhaps, never have appeared on the stage, had not her father, a captain in the army, squandered her little fortune at an early period of her life. In consequence of this disaster she went to reside with her aunt, who kept the Mitre tavern in the then St. James's Market, where Farquhar, the dramatist, one day overheard her reading Beaumont and Fletcher's *Scornful Lady*, in which she displayed such ease and spirit, that, struck by her evident advantages for the stage, he framed an excuse to enter the little parlour behind the bar, in which Miss Nancy was sitting.

Farquhar fell a victim to her charms, and it has been said, from a desire of possessing what the theatre would give him the means to attempt, he urged her to try her talents on the stage, and after a little decent entreaty, not without trouble on Farquhar's part, she made her debut.

Sir John Vanburgh frequented the house, and was known to Mrs. Oldfield's mother, from whom he received

a communication of the great warmth with which Farquhar extolled her daughter's abilities. Vanburgh immediately addressed himself to the young lady, and having ascertained that her fancy tended to parts of a sprightly nature, he recommended her to Rich, the manager of Drury-Lane, by whom she was immediately engaged at a salary of fifteen shillings a week.

Her talents soon rendered her distinguished among the young actresses of the time, and a man of quality having been heard to express himself much in her favour, Mr. Rich, who was no judge of merit himself, increased her terms to twenty shillings a week. Sir John Vanburgh has, however, the great honour of bringing forward this eminent actress, by giving her the part of Alinda, in *The Pilgrim*, a gentle character, which well became that diffidence for which she was then chiefly distinguished.

But it was not till 1705 that she was allowed to have attained her professional eminence. In that year she first became, properly speaking, publicly known; and in Lady Betty Modish, a character in *The Careless Husband* of Cibber, she attracted the attention she had laboured to attain. She was tall, genteel, and well-shaped; her expressive features were enlivened by large and intelligent eyes, which she had a method of half shutting at times, that was delightfully comic and agreeable; in air and elegance of manner she excelled all her competitors, and was greatly superior to most of the young actresses in compass and harmony of voice.

In tragedy, Mrs. Oldfield, from not liking it so well as comedy, never reached so much dignity as it was in her power to have done; and in the full round of her glory she used to slight her best personations of the serious drama, saying sometimes, "I hate to have a page dragging

my train about; why don't they give Porter these parts? she can put on a better tragedy-face than I can." But the constant applause by which she was followed, so far reconciled her to them, that she generally at last consented to appear in tragic parts without much reluctance. Thomson's Sophonisba was the latest of this description, and upon her action and deportment the author has expressed himself with great ardour in the following lines.

"Mrs. Oldfield, in the character of Sophonisba, has excelled what even in the fondness of an author I could either wish or imagine; the grace, dignity, and happy variety of her action have been universally applauded, and are truly admirable." And his praise is not more liberal than just. The style of grandeur in which she uttered this line—

"Not one base word of Carthage, for thy soul—"

was at the time greatly commended, and produced an astonishing effect on the audience.

But her Lady Townly has been universally admitted as her *chef-d'œuvre*. She slided so gracefully into the foibles and excesses of a fine woman confident in her wit and the strength of her charms, that no successor in the part has ever equalled her.

Notwithstanding her questionable private life, she was often invited to the houses of women of fashion as unblemished in character as elevated in rank, for in those days it was the custom to invite distinguished professional people entirely for their public qualities alone, and without reference to their private delinquencies. Even the Royal family did not disdain to see Mrs. Oldfield at their parties. George the Second and Queen Caroline,

when Prince and Princess of Wales, often condescended to converse with her.

It is supposed that she was engaged in a tender intercourse with Farquhar, and was the Penelope of his amatory correspondence.—She lived successively with Arthur Manwaring, one of the most accomplished characters of the age, and with General Churchill; by each of whom she had a son. One day the Princess of Wales told her that she heard that General Churchill and she were married. "So it is said, may it please your Royal Highness, but we have not owned it yet."

In private life, Mrs. Oldfield was generous, witty, and well-bred, and she was kind to Savage, though she disliked the man. It has been said, that to her influence he is indebted for his pardon when he was so unjustly cast for death. It is not, however, quite true that she allowed him an annuity, as ascribed to her by Dr. Johnson. With Pope she was never a favourite; indeed the players of no sex were ever such with that acute and waspish satirist. She, it is well known, was the dying coquette of one of his epistles; and yet he did not always treat her with his wonted severity, though he never lost an opportunity of giving her a fling.* In fact, she was a curious compound of sense and beauty, and hazarded with impunity many foolish sayings, which she would, perhaps, have been the first herself to laugh at. One day she happened to be in some danger in a Gravesend-boat, and when the rest of the passengers lamented their fate, she put on an air of conscious dignity, and told them their deaths would be only a private loss: "but I am a public concern!"

She died on the 23rd of October, 1730, not only

* Engaging Oldfield! who with grace and ease
Could join the arts to ruin and to please.

lamented for her rare professional endowments, but her agreeable qualities as a woman. Had her birth placed her in a higher rank of life, she had certainly appeared in reality what she was often on the stage—an agreeable, gay woman of quality, a little too conscious of her natural beauty. In the wearing of her person it is said she was particularly fortunate—her figure was always improving to her thirty-sixth year; her excellence in acting was ever progressive, and she possessed an inestimable quality of never undertaking any part she liked, without having all the helps in it that another could possibly suggest, and yet it was hard to give her any hint she was unable to improve. She was, indeed, in all that respected her profession, tractable, judicious, and modest. Upon her extraordinary merits as Lady Townly, the managers made her a present of fifty guineas beyond her salary; and in her last illness, she had the good sense and generosity to decline the residue of her salary. She was, to the last scene she acted, the delight of her spectators—

> Where in the whole such various beauties shine,
> 'Twere idle upon errors to repine.

## RICHARD SAVAGE.

This vagabond was so poor a player, that had not his life been superbly written by Dr. Samuel Johnson, it should not have received a place in this work; but the singular merits of that celebrated piece of biography, and the no less remarkable misrepresentations, as I conceive, by which it is deformed, induce me to attempt a version that shall not be so liable to objections on the score of probability. Savage was one of the Doctor's associates, and whatever affection could dictate, talent suggest, and eloquence enforce, has been employed to adorn and exalt his character.

The Countess of Macclesfield, a dissolute woman, had, for some time prior to the year 1697, lived in vexation with the Earl her husband, when their unhappiness rose to such a pitch, that she resolved to be divorced from him, and accordingly declared the child, with which she was then great, begotten by the Earl Rivers. In those days the legislature was less scrupulous in many of its proceedings than it is in ours. Without obtaining, in the usual manner, a divorce in the Spiritual Court, the Earl of Macclesfield proceeded at once to parliament, and procured an act, by which his marriage was dissolved, and the children of his wife illegitimated. While his Lordship was prosecuting this object, the Countess was, on the 10th of January 1697-8, delivered of a son:

at his baptism, Earl Rivers stood godfather, and gave him his own name.

The circumstances under which Savage was born, naturally, perhaps, rendered him an object unpleasant to his mother; he was the witness of her guilt, and she would feel towards him as if he had been the cause of her degradation. It might have been otherwise, and instead of distaste to the sight of the infant, she might, in one of those caprices of affection which nature, in similar cases, sometimes produces, have cherished him with intenser maternal fondness. In this, however, the more common law prevailed; and she accordingly sent him from her, committing him to the care of a poor woman, who was directed to educate him as her own. Her mother, the Lady Mason, was the agent in the business; and, notwithstanding that Dr. Johnson probably received his information from Savage himself, I cannot discern the equity of the opinion he expresses concerning this lady, nor was he justified in making use of the strong insinuation to her prejudice which he has done. He says—"Her mother, the Lady Mason, whether in approbation, or to prevent more criminal contrivances, engaged to transact with the nurse, to pay her for her care, and to superintend the education of the child."

The conduct of Lady Mason in this transaction is susceptible of a far more charitable interpretation; and unless her general character warranted the suspicion, Dr. Johnson has treated her with libellous injustice. As a mother, she could not but be grieved at her daughter's dishonour. It was natural that she should desire to see the witness of her disgrace removed from under the eyes of their friends and associates; and, in engaging to effect the necessary arrangements with the nurse, she but per-

formed a natural part. It is not true that Savage was "born with a legal claim to honour and to affluence;" on the contrary, he was born with a taint that rendered him obnoxious to those who were interested in his welfare; and Dr. Johnson, in the manner in which he speaks of this, does not evince his wonted acumen. He refers the feelings on the subject to a state of nature. He ought to have recollected, that the parties concerned in the expulsion of the bastard were habituated to an artificial condition, in which the feelings of nature are weaker in influence than the usages and institutions of society. The utmost degree of culpability which I am able to discover in the conduct of the mother, even upon Dr. Johnson's statement, amounts only to a wish to keep the child out of sight; for it by no means appears, in any stage of the transaction, that concealment was at all sought—quite the contrary. Before the birth, the bastardy was proclaimed, and the subject discussed in the House of Lords: and at the birth, Earl Rivers, the assigned father, openly came forward, and assumed the paternity, as far as the law and the custom of the country would admit. Mrs. Lloyd, a lady who assisted at the christening in the capacity of godmother, so long as she lived, looked upon the child with tenderness: she knew that he had been removed from his mother by the Lady Mason, and that it was intended he should not be publicly brought up as her son.

Mrs. Lloyd continued her attentions to Savage till he was ten years old; and, at her death, she bequeathed to him a legacy of three hundred pounds. It is clear from this statement that there was no concealment for ten years. Dr. Johnson says of the legacy, that, as Savage "had none to prosecute his claim—to shelter him from

oppression, or to call in the law to the assistance of justice—her will (Mrs. Lloyd's)was eluded by the executors, and no part of the money was ever paid."

I am sure the reader will agree with me, that this is a very "lame and impotent conclusion;" and that it is rankly imbued with that coarse misrepresentation which vulgar minds make, as it were, in extenuation of their debasement, when they have family connexions which they have not been able to preserve. Though, for a time, the executors of Mrs. Lloyd might have withheld the legacy from her godson, yet they could not always have done so. When he came of age, he was competent surely to have prosecuted them; and he was certainly not without the capacity to discern his right, nor the disposition to annoy where he thought that right denied. The whole story, as related by Dr. Johnson, is full of discrepancies, and bears upon its forehead the marks of fallacy. He was himself incapable of making untrue statements; and, save in this affair, his judgment has been esteemed of a higher and more accurate order, even though it has been a general opinion that he was on some points the most inveterately prejudiced of mankind. It is surprising that the Doctor never suspected that the reason why Savage did not obtain the legacy might have been that he could not prove his identity.

After the death of Mrs. Lloyd, Lady Mason still continued her care; and, under her direction, Savage was placed at a small grammar-school near St. Alban's, where he was called by the name of his nurse. Here he was initiated in literature; and being of a lively genius, it is reasonable to suppose that his progress was above mediocrity. While Savage was at school, Earl Rivers

died. "He had frequently inquired for his son," says Dr. Johnson, but on what authority is not stated, "and had always been amused with evasive answers. On his deathbed, however, he thought it his duty to provide for him, and therefore demanded a positive account, with an importunity not to be diverted or denied;" and, the Doctor adds, "his mother, who could no longer refuse an answer, determined, at least, to give such as should cut him off for ever from that happiness which competence affords, and therefore declared that he was dead—which is, perhaps, the first instance of a lie invented by a mother to deprive her son of a provision which was designed him by another, and which she could not expect herself though he should lose it."

I would rather believe that Dr. Johnson was in error, than that Nature went so far wrong. There is no shadow of evidence to show that Mrs. Brett—as the alleged mother of Savage was now called, in consequence of a second marriage with Colonel Brett, who became a patentee of Drury-lane Theatre—was in personal communication with Earl Rivers. But, granted that she had told him, or wrote to him, that their son was dead, might it not have been the case? for, as I shall have occasion to show, besides the fact relative to Mrs. Lloyd's legacy already noticed, the identity of the Countess of Macclesfield's son, and Savage, the poet and player, is by no means satisfactorily established. Be it also observed, that Earl Rivers could not but know, in the long course of more than ten years, in which the child was under the direction of his grandmother, Lady Mason, that she was the proper person to ask concerning him. But to suppose that, in so long a period, Earl Rivers, who had no objection to acknowledge the child—who

was the child's godfather—never once inquired after him, is to accuse human nature, in his Lordship, of as great an exception to its customs, as in the case of the mother: probability revolts at the supposition. Perhaps Lady Mason might have been by this time dead; but, as I have shown, there was no special concealment, at least from Lord Rivers, of the existence of the child, so long as he lived; nor was it likely, when the part which Mrs. Lloyd acted towards him is considered, that there could have been any difficulty, so long as she was alive, of tracing him.

Dr. Johnson assumes that the wickedness of the mother, in this instance, was true: he even goes so far as to imply that Lord Rivers "had, in his will, bequeathed to Savage six thousand pounds; but that, on receiving the account of his death, he altered the will, and bestowed the legacy on another person." I think the fact of the case is, that the son of Earl Rivers and Lady Macclesfield was, at this time, really dead; and this opinion is strengthened by the over endeavour of Savage to exaggerate her unnatural enmity. If she had been his mother, there was on his part as great a deficiency of natural feeling towards her, as there was on her part towards him. Truly, if we consider the number of years during which Lord Rivers, his father and godfather, never inquired after him, and the reciprocal conduct of the mother and the son, they must have been three of the most extraordinary personages ever described, for deficiency of natural affection.

This interception of the provision which Lord Rivers intended to make, is rendered still more improbable by what Dr. Johnson, on the authority of Savage, immediately after states, viz. that his mother "endeavoured

to rid herself from the danger of being at any time made known to him, by sending him secretly to the American plantations." Now be it remembered, that his mother became afterwards the wife of the patentee of the very theatre which Savage most frequented.

"By whose kindness this scheme of kidnapping was counteracted, or by what interposition Mrs. Brett was induced to lay aside her design, I know not. It is not improbable that the Lady Mason might persuade or compel her to desist, or perhaps she could not easily find accomplices wicked enough to concur in such an action." After stating this, Dr. Johnson makes the following observations, the justice or common-sense of which is by no means apparent—"It may be conceived," says he, "that those who had, by a long gradation of guilt, hardened their hearts against the sense of common wickedness, would yet be shocked at the design of a mother to expose her son to slavery and want—to expose him without interest and without provocation; and Savage might, on this occasion, find protectors and advocates among those who had long traded in crimes, and whom compassion had never touched before."

Without more particularly adverting to the improbability altogether of kidnapping the boy for Virginia, I would only remark on the plain nonsense of Dr. Johnson's observations. Was it at all necessary to such a kidnapping scheme, that the mother should disclose to the agents her relationship to the boy they were to convey out of the country in so surreptitious a manner? and if they previously knew the relationship, and were creatures capable of executing such an unnatural machination, would they have scrupled to get this rich lady so effectually into their power as they would have done,

either by executing her scheme, or by seemingly conniving at it, by taking her son into their own charge? If they did not know of the connexion, what comes of the Doctor's moral revulsion of the kidnappers? This part of the story, which rests on Savage's authority alone—and Savage was never respected by his contemporaries for his probity—I have no hesitation in at once rejecting, as in its conception an extravagant monstrosity; for the mother in all this period seems to have left the management of the child entirely to her own mother, Lady Mason, and no cause nor motive had occurred to move her to intercept the intended legacy, far less to instigate her to the wickedness of sending her son to slavery in Virginia.

Dr. Johnson, in the same frame of insatiable credulity, continues—"Being hindered, by whatever means, of banishing him into another country, she formed soon after a scheme for burying him in poverty and obscurity in his own; and that his station in life, if not the place of his residence, might keep him for ever at a distance from her—(and yet she was the wife of a patentee of the theatre)—she ordered him to be placed with a shoemaker in Holborn, that after the usual time of trial he might become his apprentice." The good Doctor, in the simplicity of his heart, states this on the authority of Savage himself. Now, mark how loosely this tale hangs together. In the first place, it supposes the mother all this time to be spontaneously actuated by something like a demoniacal virulence against her son, although it is manifest that Lady Mason was the agent in all that related to the child by Lord Rivers. Now, was Lady Mason dead when this project of the apprenticeship was hatched? It is not so said. Then who was the agent to negotiate with the shoemaker? Did that agent know

of the relationship of the child? Was the shoemaker so incurious as to take no step to ascertain who were the connexions of this mysterious apprentice? Was no money to be paid to the shoemaker? The story—though it be true, in fact, that Savage was an apprentice to a shoemaker in Holborn—appears utterly improbable in the alleged anterior machination. If Lady Mason had been alive, she would of course, from her previous part in the plot, have been the negotiator, through the nurse, as whose son the bastard passed; and here again the character of Lady Mason comes to be considered. Has it ever been blemished in all this business? and she was, at least, known to the nurse, if the nurse did not know who were the parents of the child. But observe what follows.

While Savage is apprentice to the shoemaker, the nurse, who had always treated him as her own son, dies, and Savage, as her son, proceeds to "take care of those few effects which by her death were, as he imagined, become his own." Now had this old woman no relations who knew that the child had been placed with her? none to interfere, as people in their condition of life were likely to do, that he should have been permitted to take possession of her effects? Mark also; in taking possession of her effects, Dr. Johnson says, "he opened her boxes and examined her papers, among which he found some letters written to her by the Lady Mason, which informed him of his birth, and the reasons for which it was concealed." This is curious. Is it probable that Lady Mason would have committed herself by writing any such letters to the old woman, had there existed such a wish for concealment as it is attempted to make us believe? That there may have been letters from Lady Mason, which suggested the idea of inquiring to

whom they related; and that Savage, by inquiry, might have ascertained they concerned the child of Lady Macclesfield and Lord Rivers, which had been placed while an infant with his mother, the nurse, is highly probable; and from the character of his mind, it is not at all unlikely that he should have either imagined himself to be that child, or fancied that, with the evidence, he might pass himself off as such. My opinion is that the latter was the case, and that the poet and player Richard Savage was, in his capacity of Lady Macclesfield's son, an impostor. A remarkable gleam of light is thrown upon the probability of this notion by a circumstance hitherto unnoticed. The famous trial of the Annesley family began about this time, and it is curious in how many points the abduction of the heir of that family resembles the pretended machinations of which Savage gives an account of his being himself, both in what was done and intended, the object.*

When Savage had examined the papers found in the box of his nurse, or mother as I am disposed to think she really was, he remained no longer satisfied with his employment as a shoemaker, but resolved to share the affluence of the lady he was determined to consider as his mother; and accordingly, without scruple, he made use of every art to awaken her tenderness and attract her regard. It is singular enough, however, that this was done through the medium of letters; the natural course would have been, had there been no consciousness of de-

* A summary of the Annesley case as it was tried, and as it appeared in the Appeal, which brings it within the State-trials, was published as "The Memoirs of an unfortunate Young Nobleman, returned from a Thirteen Years' Slavery in America, where he had been sent by the wicked contrivance of his cruel Uncle." Without the unnatural feeling of the mother, the Annesley case is not more extraordinary than Savage has made his.

ception, to have gone to her at once in person, for he had no reason at that time to think, though she might desire that her child should remain unknown, that she would reject him in the manner she did. Dr. Johnson says, that "neither his letters, nor the interposition of those friends which his merit or his distress procured him, made any impression upon her mind. She still resolved to neglect, though she could no longer disown him." Now this is not correct; for she did acknowledge that she had had a child, but which was dead, and she did deny that Savage was her son. In fact, being persuaded that he was an impostor, all the extraordinary antipathy with which she regarded him is explained, by the simple circumstance of her believing that her own child was dead, and the natural mortification that she could not but suffer at the revival, after the lapse of so many years, of her dishonour and public degradation.

Failing in the speculation of establishing himself as the son of a lady of fashion and of great wealth, he had recourse to his natural talents. At this period the Bangorian controversy agitated the literary world, and filled the press with pamphlets and the coffee-houses with disputants. On this subject Savage made his first attempt, without any other knowledge of the question than what he had casually collected from conversation; and wrote and published a poem against the Bishop. The merit or success of this performance is not known; Savage himself became ashamed of it, and endeavoured to suppress it by destroying all the copies he could collect.

Of the talent of this remarkable adventurer there can be no question; he was still but in his eighteenth year when he wrote *Woman's a Riddle,* which was brought out on the stage, but from which the unhappy author derived no profit. The piece had been originally offered

by him to the theatre, and was returned as unlikely to succeed in representation. In consequence of which rejection he gave the manuscript to Mr. Bullock, and he having more interest, changed it in some respects, and brought it upon the stage.

In what way he maintained himself at this time is not explained; but in two years after his first play he obtained a representation of another comedy, *Love in a Veil*, with, however, little better pecuniary success, for it appeared so late in the season, that he obtained no other benefit from it than the acquaintance of Sir Richard Steele and Mr. Wilks the actor.

Sir Richard having heard his story, declared in his favour with all the warmth of his character, promoted his interest with zeal, related his alleged misfortunes on every occasion calculated to bespeak sympathy, applauded his merit, and took every opportunity of recommending him to the favour of others, "The inhumanity of his mother," said Sir Richard, "has given him a right to find every good man his father."

Nor did he admit Savage to his acquaintance only, but to his confidence, which appeared to consist in assisting Sir Richard to evade his creditors. But although for a time the friendship of Sir Richard was necessary to Savage, his practices and example were not calculated to improve his habits. The kindness of the Knight did not, however, end in slight favours; on the contrary, his affection ripened to such a degree, that he proposed Savage should marry his natural daughter, on whom he agreed to bestow a thousand pounds. But Sir Richard, who was in promise and intention a man of great generosity, so conducted his affairs, that he was never able to raise the money, and the marriage was in consequence deferred from

time to time, and was in the end broken off entirely, in consequence of the imprudence of Savage himself, in representing some of his patron's foibles before persons who he had not suspected would be so malicious as to prove tale-bearers.

Savage being thus again abandoned to fortune, was reduced to the greatest distress, insomuch that, having nowhere to lay his head, he sometimes slept in the theatre and behind the scenes. This miserable condition was reported to Wilks the actor, who, on hearing his story, became greatly interested in him, and went himself to Mrs. Brett, as I have said, and represented to her his extreme misery. She, however, denied that he was her son, repeated the story of the death of her child, and refused to acknowledge him. Wilks, however, so won upon her charity, that he obtained from her sixty pounds. It is said that she even promised him one hundred and fifty pounds more, but, being engaged in the bubble speculations of that time, soon after lost so much money by the South-Sea scheme, that she pretended it was out of her power to assist him farther. This circumstance has been assumed as a proof of the truth of his story, but I think it affords none; because, from the gallant address and eloquence of Wilks, sixty pounds might be obtained from a gay and wealthy lady of damaged quality, to relieve a distressed young man, without being any proof of so close a connexion as Savage had represented existed between them.

The friendship of Wilks drew him into more intimate acquaintance with the other players, and his story being well known among them, and congenial to their romantic imaginations, they treated him with great kindness; among others, Mrs. Oldfield took a charitable interest in his mis-

fortunes, and was so moved by the tale, that she actually allowed him a pension of fifty pounds a year, which was regularly paid during her life. The character of that accomplished actress might have led the world to suspect that this generosity was not altogether, as Savage represented it, the gratuity of benevolence; especially as Dr. Johnson admits that his veracity was questioned, and that the only mention Savage has made of her in his works is in praise of her beauty.

By the kindness of Wilks he had sometimes a benefit, and on these occasions he was patronized by some of the nobility, on account of his remarkable story. Dr. Johnson says that the Duke of Dorset told Savage, that it was just to consider him as an injured nobleman, and that in his opinion the nobility ought to think themselves obliged, without solicitation, to take every opportunity of supporting him by their countenance and patronage.

It is surprising that in repeating this story, which the Doctor probably did on the authority of Savage himself, the absurdity of it did not strike him; the expression ascribed to the Duke rendering it ridiculous to suppose that his Grace would make use of any such expression, in speaking of one who, by the nature of his birth, was precluded from even pretending to rank. Another still less credible story is related of these benefits, no less than that "Savage had generally the mortification to hear that the whole interest of his mother was employed to frustrate his applications, and that she never left any expedient untried by which he might be cut off from the possibility of supporting life." The whole style, indeed, of the Doctor's Life of Savage is most extraordinary; it is not easy to conceive how a man of probity, and of the alleged discernment of Dr. Johnson, should have written

so strongly of things as facts which appear so questionable. In what way, for example, could Mrs. Brett have interfered, otherwise than by representing to her friends that Savage was really not her son, and that in pretending to be so he was an impostor? and if she believed and knew that her own son was dead, it was natural that she should do so. But in what way could she conceal in this, that she had once had a son, or even attempt it, the fact of her divorce being as notorious as the law itself? It might be that some believed his story; indeed, he was possessed of sufficient plausibility to make converts; but when the ordinary feelings of humanity are outraged by his annotations, it is impossible not to regard him with confirmed suspicion of his being an impostor. Dr. Johnson, in being so strongly an advocate for this loose and licentious person, has departed farther from his own reputation than in any other instance of his life, vehemently as it was occasionally distinguished both for prejudice and vituperation. It is indeed amazing, that, with all the indignation which the Doctor expresses against the imputed unnatural mother of Savage, he never seems to have examined into the truth of the story. It was always, as it would appear, taken upon Savage's own representation—and he, it is admitted, was a man whose veracity was questioned. But to proceed with his biography.

His attendance at the theatre gave him a better idea of the drama than when he so precociously attempted comedy, and this led him, in the year 1724, to construct a tragedy on the story of Sir Thomas Overbury The history of this tragedy is in itself calculated to draw tears; for, if we divest ourselves of the suspicion attached to the author's tale of his birth, and consider

him only as a man of genius contending with Fortune, there is nothing more truly tragic in the whole compass of poetry and romance. "During a considerable part of the time he was employed upon this performance," says Dr. Johnson, "he was without lodgings, and often without meat, nor had he any other conveniences for study than the fields or the street allowed him. There he used to walk and form his speeches, and afterwards step into a shop, beg for a few moments the use of pen and ink, and write down what he had composed upon paper which he had picked up by accident." This is indeed a deplorable description of genius in beggary, but it partakes of the exaggeration which runs through the whole narrative. The sympathy of the reader revolts at the swollen and tumid distress, as inconsistent with the probability of nature. That Savage was during the time in great misery cannot be questioned, and that he may have once or twice begged for pen and ink to write down a speech he had composed in his walk is probable, but that it was a custom of necessity with him during the whole time he was engaged in writing the tragedy, is utterly incredible.

When the tragedy was finished, his acquaintance with the actors was then turned to some account, but it was attended with humiliation; not, however, materially more severe than that which must be endured by every man of genius who ventures to encounter the illiterate phalanx by whom access to the stage is defended against Nature and Taste. The worst that Savage appears to have suffered was from the suggestions of Theophilus Cibber, yet, in the preface to the play, he has commended him for every blooming excellence.

Before the tragedy was deemed ready for represen-

tation, among others of whose criticism Savage was desirous of availing himself, was Aaron Hill, who wrote the prologue and epilogue, in which he touches on the author's ill-fate with delicacy and tenderness. When at last the play was by all these helps and emendations—the impertinences of the actors, and perhaps the strictures of more competent critics—ready for representation, it was brought out, and Savage himself made his first appearance in the character of Sir Thomas Overbury, but with no éclat. Neither his voice, look, nor gesture were such as are expected on the stage; and he was so much ashamed of having been reduced, as it is said, to appear as a player, that he always blotted out his name from the list, when a copy of his tragedy was to be shown to his friends. This pretext of modesty is of a piece with his character. It is much more consistent with human nature, that he should have desired the concealment because he had failed in the part, than that he should have been ashamed of attempting a task which misfortune almost imposed upon him. On the authority of Dr. Johnson, which in a question of literary taste may be safely relied on, the tragedy of *Sir Thomas Overbury* exhibited gleams and glimmerings of genius, that shone through all the clouds and mists which Theophilus Cibber had spread over it. The profits amounted to about a hundred pounds.

Savage, with all the irregularities of his conduct, had the art, either by his address or wonderful story, to attach to him in every vicissitude many friends, and the friendship of Hill did not terminate with the representation of the play; for when the dramatist was again at his last shift, he encouraged a subscription to a Miscellany of Poems with great zeal, in a periodical paper called

"The Plain Dealer," written by himself and Mr. Bond. Savage used sarcastically to call them the two contending powers of light and darkness. They wrote by turns, each six essays, and the character of the work regularly rose in Hill's weeks and fell in Mr. Bond's. Hill published the poet's story, and the more to awaken the public sympathy, he inserted some affecting verses upon the treatment which Savage had received from his mother. But Hill's kindness did not end with mere recommendation—he contributed several pieces of his own to swell the Miscellany. Nor were his kind endeavours happily fruitless. Contributions to the unfortunate author were directed to be left at Button's Coffee-house, and Savage going thither a few days afterwards, found to his surprise seventy guineas, which had been sent for him in consequence of Mr. Hill's pathetic appeal. To the Miscellany, when it was published, Savage wrote a preface, in which he gives an account of his mother's cruelty—and to which Dr. Johnson refers for some of the facts on which he grounds the severity of his animadversions on her unnatural disposition. The work was dedicated to the famous Lady Mary Wortley Montague, whom Savage flatters with more than the wonted saliva of the literary sycophants of that age.

From this period his reputation began to advance, and he appeared to be gaining on mankind, when his life and fame were both brought into imminent jeopardy. On the 20th of November, 1727, he came from Richmond, where he then lodged, that he might pursue his studies unmolested, and accidentally meeting two friends, whose names were Merchant and Gregory, he went with them to a coffee-house, where they sat late drinking. As the house could not accommodate them all with beds, they

agreed to ramble about the streets and divert themselves with such casual amusements as fortune should send them. In their ramble, seeing a light in Robinson's coffee-house, near Charing Cross, they went in. Merchant demanded a room, and was told that there was a good fire in the next parlour, which would be immediately empty, as the company in it were then paying their reckoning. Merchant, not satisfied with this answer, and being incensed with wine, rudely rushed into the room, and was followed by his companions. He then boastfully placed himself between the company and the fire, and soon after kicked down the table. A quarrel ensued; swords were drawn on both sides—for it was then the custom among all persons of gentlemanly appearance to wear swords. In the scuffle a Mr. James Sinclair was killed; Savage wounded a maid that attempted to hold him, and with Merchant forced his way out of the house. Alarmed, and in confusion, they knew not where to fly, and in attempting to conceal themselves, one of the company pursued them with some soldiers whom he had called to his assistance, and secured them. Next morning they were carried before three Justices, who committed them to the Gate-house, and in the evening they were removed to Newgate. The affair caused a great stir in the public mind, and when the day of trial came, the Court was crowded to an unusual degree. In the examination of the witnesses there was some difference in their respective depositions. But the evidence was, notwithstanding, irresistible. In his defence, Savage occupied more than an hour, during which, he was listened to, both by the court and the multitude, with the most attentive and respectful silence. Those, says Dr. Johnson, who thought he ought not to be acquitted,

acknowledged that applause could not be refused him; and those who before pitied his misfortunes, now reverenced his abilities. But Mr. Page, who presided as Judge, exhibited a degree of undignified asperity, such as rarely has disgraced the English bench. "Gentlemen of the Jury," said he, in charging, "you are to consider that Mr. Savage is a very great man; a much greater man than I or you, Gentlemen of the Jury; that he wears very fine clothes, much finer clothes than you or I, gentlemen of the Jury; that he has abundance of money in his pocket, much more than you or I, Gentlemen of the Jury; but, Gentlemen of the Jury, is it not a very hard case, Gentlemen of the Jury, that Mr. Savage should therefore kill you or me, Gentlemen of the Jury?"

This looks so like caricature, that I suspect it has received some embellishment from the veracious pen of Savage himself, and one might find some ground in it to raise an opinion, that Mr. Page was not an entire believer in all the story of the prisoner at the bar. In the end, Savage and one of his companions were found guilty of murder, and Mr. Merchant, who had no sword, of manslaughter.

The only hope which Savage had now of life was in the mercy of the Crown; but Queen Caroline, who ruled the Government, was prejudiced against him by, as it was alleged, the influence of his mother; and yet that Princess was not likely on slight grounds to have been so moved. It seems, that when Savage had discovered his birth, or imagined himself the son of Earl Rivers and the Countess of Macclesfield, he was in the practice of walking in the evening before his mother's house; and one night, seeing the door open, he entered it, and finding no person in the passage to hinder him, went up-

stairs to the drawing-room where she was sitting. His appearance alarmed her, and her cries having summoned the servants to her assistance, she accused him of an intention to murder her. Astonished at her violence, he endeavoured with the most submissive tenderness to soothe her rage, but hearing her utter such an accusation, he prudently retired, and never afterwards attempted to speak to her. In relating this anecdote Dr. Johnson falls again into the same insensibility to the plain import of the facts, which so singularly blemishes his Life of Savage, a work which for elegance of diction has long been esteemed one of the master-pieces of English literature. He goes so far as to insinuate that the calumny of the attempt to murder his mother was related by herself to the Queen; as if it were probable that, however desirous she might be to get rid of him, she would venture on so improbable a step as to interpose between the law and the royal clemency. I doubt not that the story of his entering the house, and even the accusation of the murderous intention, had been communicated to the Queen as part and parcel of his character, and that her Majesty may have been influenced by it to hesitate in granting him a pardon; but it seems to me altogether a gratuitous supposition of more wickedness than was necessary, to represent the mother as taking any step to prevent the exercise of the royal mercy.

In consequence of the reluctance which the Queen evinced to pardon this son of crime and disciple of indiscretion, the fate of Savage was considered as sealed; but the report of his talents and misfortunes happened to reach the Countess of Hertford, who, taking a deep interest in his condition, requested an audience of the Queen, and laid his case, as it was believed by the public, fully

before her Majesty. This interposition was so successful that he was admitted to bail, and on the 9th of March 1728, pleaded the King's pardon.

Savage, during his imprisonment, his trial, and the time in which he lay under sentence of death, behaved with equanimity. The singular circumstances of his life were made more generally known by a short account, and several thousand copies were in a few weeks dispersed throughout the kingdom; public compassion was awakened in his favour, and he was enabled, by frequent presents, not only to support himself, but to assist his companion in affliction. Indeed, though the general course of his life is not admissible to much favour, he evinced at times that his heart was not without kind feelings. Some time after his pardon he met in the street a wretched woman who had sworn against him at the trial with a degree of malignity that weakened the force of her testimony; she informed him that she was in distress, and besought him to relieve her. Instead of repulsing her misery, he changed the only guinea that he had, and divided it equally between them.

Being now at liberty, he was, as before, without any regular support, but dependent on the accidental favours of uncertain patronage,—sources which were sometimes copious, but at others suddenly dry. His life was in consequence spent between extravagance and penury; what he had, he squandered, because he had no doubt of being abundantly supplied.

By this time his filial affection was exhausted, and he threatened to harass Mrs. Brett with lampoons, unless she consented to purchase an exemption by allowing him a pension. This expedient, says Dr. Johnson, proved successful, merely because Lord Tyrconnel received him

into his family, treated him as his equal, and engaged to allow him a pension of two hundred a-year. But in what relation did his Lordship stand to Mrs. Brett, and was he not otherwise acquainted with Savage?—why did he take him into his family?—and when in the end he was obliged to discard him, why were his threats against Mrs. Brett then disregarded? The whole of the remarks which the Doctor makes upon this crisis of Savage's adventures is puerile and affected, and betrays a greater partiality for effect than truth.

"This," says the Doctor, "was the golden part of Mr. Savage's life, and for some time he had no reason to complain of fortune; his appearance was splendid, his expenses large, and his acquaintance extensive. He was courted by all who endeavoured to be thought men of genius, and caressed by all who valued themselves upon a refined taste. To admire Mr. Savage was a proof of discernment; and to be acquainted with him was a title to poetical reputation. His presence was sufficient to make any place of public entertainment popular; and his approbation and example constituted the fashion. So powerful is genius when it is invested with the glitter of affluence! Men willingly pay to fortune that regard which they owe to merit, and are pleased when they have an opportunity at once of gratifying their vanity and practising their duty."

I have been the more particular in making this extract because it is a fair specimen of the inflation which pervades the work. Dr. Johnson has clearly written it with no very careful reference to the condition of the man. Even with title, rank, and genius, all united, he knew enough of the world to know that Savage could not be the gorgeous character he is here represented to have

been. He was but a clever man, the dependent of a Lord, and enriched with a pension of two hundred pounds a-year! It was thoughtless exaggeration; and the Doctor finds himself in the very next page obliged to acknowledge, "that Mr. Savage's esteem was no very certain possession, and that he would lampoon at one time those whom he praised at another."

I ought not to say, that at the acts of Savage, Dr. Johnson spoke not his just sentiments; I should do injustice to that great man if I did, and appear insensible to his magnificent morality; for even while treating of his intimacy with Pope, Johnson seems to have been fully aware of its baseness. "He was considered," says the Doctor, "as a kind of confederate" with the author of the Dunciad, and "was suspected of supplying him with private intelligence and secret incidents; so that the ignominy of an informer was added to the terror of a satirist. That he was not altogether free from literary hypocrisy, and that he sometimes spoke one thing and wrote another, cannot be denied."

At one time he published a panegyric on Sir Robert Walpole, for which he was rewarded by him with twenty guineas, and yet he was very far from approving of that Minister, and in conversation mentioned him sometimes with acrimony, and generally with contempt. And what excuse did he make for this inconsistency? He alleged that at the time he was dependent upon the Lord Tyrconnel, an implicit follower of the ministry!

While Mr. Savage resided with Lord Tyrconnel, he composed his poem of *The Wanderer*, a work which displays the possession of considerable talent, and which he dedicated to his Lordship; but they soon after quarrelled, and in that quarrel it must be admitted that our

hero was by his own acknowledgments greatly to blame; and by the statements of Lord Tyrconnel, unprincipled, audacious beyond all tolerance, selfish, and fraudulent.

After he had been justly turned out of doors by Lord Tyrconnel, he wrote *The Bastard*, which he dedicated "with due reverence" to his mother. But of the story which he told himself of the molestation it occasioned to Mrs. Brett, of which he could have no means of knowing, unless we allow the absurdity that she told it herself, I for one do not believe a single syllable.

Under the name of the Volunteer Laureate he wrote for several successive years a series of adulatory verses to Queen Caroline, for which he annually received fifty pounds; but the verses were poor and vile, and the allowance he received must be considered not for their merit but in charity for himself. But full of troubles as his life had ever been, and prone as he was to exasperate them, he was not always spared from the scourge of injustice. He was libelled, and in prosecuting the libeller was himself persecuted without cause. And yet it could not be said that he was altogether an object free from suspicion; for no sooner did he receive his annual fifty pounds from the Queen than he vanished from the sight of all his friends; at last he appeared pennyless as before, but he never confessed into what haunt he had retreated, and it was commonly imagined that he spent his time and money, like other prodigals, "in riotous living."

Whether the story of Mrs. Brett was beginning to be thought better founded than the romantic tale of Savage, or that his conduct was becoming worse as he grew older, is not so much the purpose in view, as the fact, that as his days increased his miseries multiplied, and as a

resource, common in that age among literary adventurers, he had recourse to subscriptions for works that he intended to publish, but which he was either obliged to abandon from necessity, or never in sincerity meant to pursue.

His life, unhappy as it may be imagined, was in 1738 embittered with new calamities. The death of the Queen deprived him of all hopes of preferment, and he had many reasons to believe that Sir Robert Walpole abandoned him to his fortune. His spirit was, however, unconquered. His poem on her Majesty's death "may be justly ranked," says Dr. Johnson, "among the best pieces that the death of princes has produced."

His distress was now publicly known; the termination of his pension regarded as a loss—and his friends, to mitigate starvation, agreed to subscribe among them fifty pounds a-year, if he would retire to a cheap place in privacy—one of those plausible arrangements, to which few characters can long submit. He accepted the proposition, but with intentions different from those of his friends. They intended that he should retire to Swansea for life, but he designed only to take the opportunity which their scheme offered, to retreat from the world to prepare a play for the stage, and his other works for the press. "He had," says Dr. Johnson, "planned a scheme of life for the country, of which he had no knowledge but from pastorals and songs. He imagined that he should be transported to scenes of flowery felicity, like those which one poet has reflected to another; and had projected a perpetual round of innocent pleasures, of which he suspected no interruption from pride, or ignorance, or brutality."

Full of these beautiful fancies, a subscription having

been raised, by which the sum of fifty pounds a year was procured for him—equal to the magnificent pension which "a poor player," Mrs. Oldfield, had many years before allowed—he left London in 1739, having taken a tender leave of his friends. But he had not been gone above fourteen days, when they received a letter from him, saying that he was still upon the road and without money! A remittance was sent to him, but at Bristol he found an embargo upon the shipping, so that he could not proceed to Swansea, and in the mean time he so irritated his friends that many of them cancelled their subscriptions, and in the end he was allowed to proceed to Swansea much dissatisfied with his diminished allowance. He however completed his tragedy; had recourse to another subscription-scheme for his works, and yet, through a course of distressing difficulties, he preserved his mind in its wonted cheerfulness.

In this state of things his fortunes continued till the 10th of January 1742-3, when he was arrested at Bristol for a debt of eight pounds. After this event he was removed to Newgate in that city, where the celebrated Beau Nash, of Bath, sent him five pounds. His time in the prison was spent in study, or in receiving visits, but he sometimes descended to lower amusement, and mingled in conversation with the criminals. When he had been six months in prison, he received from his friend Pope a letter, containing a charge of very atrocious ingratitude. To this charge he protested his innocence, and was evidently disturbed at the accusation. In a few days he became unwell, but his condition was not deemed to be dangerous. The last time the keeper saw him was on the 31st July 1743, when Savage called him to his bed-side, and said with an uncommon earnestness, "I have some-

thing to say to you"—but, after a pause, he moved his hand in a melancholy manner, and finding himself unable to utter what he intended to communicate, said "'Tis gone!"—the keeper soon after left him. My persuasion is that he intended to confess his imposture. Next morning he died, and was buried in the churchyard of St. Peter's Bristol, at the expense of the keeper.*

* Since the foregoing was sent to press, I have had the use of the Garrick papers, and I find a remarkable notice in them applicable to this subject. Gilbert Walmsley, the early friend of Johnson and Garrick, says in a letter to Garrick, Nov. 3, 1746:—"When you see Johnson pray give him my compliments, and tell him, I esteem him a great genius,—quite lost both to himself and the world." This is in allusion to his attachment to Savage, and the Life recently published. A writer in the Biographia Dramatica says, "They often wandered whole nights in the streets for want of money to procure lodging." And yet Mrs. Johnson was living in London. When these papers are published, a new storehouse will be opened to the biography of that period.

## SUSANNA CENTLIVRE.

Reality often beggars romance in the biography of the players, and the memoirs of this gifted lady, though not distinguished by the occurrence of many events, verifies the opinion. She was the daughter of a Lincolnshire gentleman, Mr. Freeman, who being a zealous Parliamentarian, was, at the time of the Restoration, exposed to such persecution, that his estate was confiscated, and himself obliged to seek an asylum in Ireland, where some have supposed that, about the year 1680, our heroine was born.

Before she had completed her twelfth year she lost her mother, from whom, as her works abundantly testify, she must have received, even with her innate genius, the elements of an education conducted with no ordinary solicitude and skill. Her father married a second time, but her situation grew so unhappy with her stepmother, that it could not be endured, and in consequence, although almost destitute of money, she resolved to go up to London, conscious of possessing endowments that would help her to fortune.

At this time her father was again residing in England, and it happened in the course of her elopement from his house, that as she was proceeding on her journey alone and on foot, she fell in with the celebrated Anthony Hammond, then a student at the university of Cam-

bridge. Interested by her youth, beauty, and enterprise, he fell instantly in love with her, and prevailed on her to accompany him to Cambridge, where, dressing her in boy's clothes, he introduced her to his companions as a relation who had come to see the colleges.

This single adventure was a suitable prologue to an eccentric life, for it was obviously too extraordinary to last long, as, indeed, the result showed. When their intercourse had lasted some time, they grew tired of their hidden joys, insomuch that Hammond found no difficulty in persuading her to proceed to London; and having furnished her with money, and a letter of recommendation to a gentlewoman of his acquaintance in town, they parted with protestations of attachment and hopes to meet again.

Whether this story is altogether well founded cannot now be determined, but certain it is that in her sixteenth year she was married to her first husband, a well-born gentleman of the name of Fox; he, however, died in the course of the first twelve months, and with the aid of her wit and beauty she soon solaced her widowhood by a second marriage to an officer in the army of the name of Carrol, who was killed in a duel within a year and a half of their union.

To her second husband she appears to have been sincerely attached, and his loss was lamented as a great affliction; but the straitened circumstances in which he had bequeathed her to the world, roused her latent genius, and animated those talents for literature which have so brilliantly inscribed her name among the most illustrious dramatic writers of England. Alike to divert her melancholy and to improve her scanty means of livelihood, she had recourse to her pen, and published some

of her earliest pieces under the name of Carrol. Her first drama was a tragedy, *The Perjured Husband*, but the native bent of her talent soon induced her to shake off the buskin; and among her eighteen plays only one other attempt in that department is found.

When she made her first appearance on the stage seems to be involved in some obscurity, for she never became a distinguished performer, though she undoubtedly possessed an admirable conception of the dramatic art; and it is no doubt owing to this circumstance that the event was so little remarkable. We find, however, that in 1706, while acting in Lee's *Rival Queens* at Windsor, the beam of her bright eye pierced the heart of Mr. Joseph Centlivre, the principal cook to Queen Anne; soon after he married her, and they lived happily together for seventeen years, during which she enjoyed a friendly intimacy with most of the eminent wits of that period, and was much caressed by the great. Her spirit and beauty were, indeed, highly celebrated; and, notwithstanding the blemish she incurred in the outset of her life, her good sense defended her against the assaults of folly. Like her father, she was uniformly a fervent partisan, and zealously attached to Whig principles, more eagerly so, perhaps, than was comely in her sex. Her comedies evince not only this predilection, but an ardent regard for the Hanoverian family; and it has been said, that though by it she procured some friends, she provoked many adversaries.

On the 1st of December 1723, she died in the house of her husband in Spring Gardens, Charing Cross, and her memory was preserved with sentiments of esteem and affection by the numerous friends she had secured by her good-nature, intelligence, and sprightly conversation.

These brief notices comprehend all that has been deemed worthy of being recorded for the information of posterity concerning Mrs. Centlivre; but we can hardly imagine that the knowledge of character and of the ways of the world, which shines through her works, could have been obtained without adventure. In this knowledge she has few superiors; for if in wit she was inferior to her distinguished dramatic predecessor, Mrs. Bohn, she was more than her equal in the skill with which she constructed her amusing plots, and the true nature with which she endowed her characters. In terseness of language and brilliancy of wit she has had many rivals, for in these respects she was not eminent; but the success with which her *Bold Stroke for a Wife*, *The Busy Body*, and, above all, *The Wonder*, still maintain her celebrity on the stage, are proofs how well she had observed the manners of mankind, and penetrated to the cells of the comic echoes in the heart.

## COLLEY CIBBER.

Colley Cibber was born in London on the 6th November 1671. His father was a native of Holstein, and came into England some time before the Restoration. He was a sculptor by profession, and of considerable celebrity. He executed the basso-relievo on the pedestal of the London Monument, and the two figures of Raving and Melancholy Madness, which were formerly over the gates of Bethlehem Hospital. One of these, the statue of Raving Madness, has always been esteemed a work of superior skill and art. His mother was descended of a respectable family of the name of Colley, in Rutlandshire, but which had fallen into decay.

In the year 1682, when little more than ten years of age, he was sent to the freeschool of Grantham, in Lincolnshire, where he passed from the lowest form to the uppermost, and acquired all the learning he ever could pretend to. His proficiency, as he acknowledges himself, was not remarkable; for he was a giddy, negligent boy, full of spirits, with small capacity to do right, and a lively alacrity to do wrong.

It was not, however, so much from any deficiency of talent, that he was not distinguished among his schoolfellows, as from his playfulness and indiscretion; indeed, his thoughtlessness, even at school, exposed him to many mortifications, besides being whipped for inattention to

his lessons. On one occasion, a great boy, in some wrangle at play, had insulted him, upon which he gave him a box on the ear; the blow was soon returned by another, which brought him to the ground, when one of his companions, whom he thought a good-natured lad, cried out to his antagonist, "Beat him, beat him soundly." This so amazed Cibber, that he lost the spirit to resist, and burst into tears. When the fray was over, he took his friend aside, and inquired how he came to be so fiercely against him: "Because," replied the boy, "you are always jeering and making a jest of me to every boy in the school." Without intending any harm, his wit had secretly provoked the malice of his companion to such a degree that he could not repress his vindictive feelings when an opportunity occurred to indulge them. But he adds: "Many a mischief have I brought upon myself by the same folly in riper life. Whatever reason I had to reproach my companion for declaring against me, I had none to wonder at it, while I was so often hurting him. I deserved his enmity by my not having had sense enough to know that I had hurt him; and he hated me, because he had not sense enough to know that I never intended to hurt him."

What Colley Cibber observed upon having undesignedly provoked his school friend into an enemy, is a common case in society; errors of this kind often sour the blood of acquaintance into aversion where it is but little suspected. It is not enough to say that no offence was intended: if the person to whom it is offered has either a wrong head or wants capacity to make the distinction, it may have the same effect as the grossest intention. In reality, if an adversary's parts are too slow to return your wit in kind, it is inhumanity to suppose him to be of

a passive nature; if you find him silent, there can be no excuse for not leaving off. When conscious that an antagonist can give as well as take, then the smarter the hit the more agreeable the parry. A manly character will never be grave on an attack of this kind; but in the merriment of vulgar people, when the jest begins to swell into earnest, he that has least wit generally gives the first blow. Among the better sort, readiness of wit is not always a sign of intrinsic merit, nor the want of it a reproach to a man of plain sense, who therefore should never have these liberties taken with him,—ill-nature, I am sure it is, which a generous spirit will always avoid. Wounds given by inconsiderate insults are as dangerous as those given by oppression. There is, besides, a grossness in raillery that is sometimes more painful to the hearers than to the persons engaged in it.

In February 1684-5, King Charles II. died, and, being the only King he had ever seen, he speaks of his death with a degree of regret that can hardly, in these times, be appreciated. "It made," said he, "a strong impression upon me, as it drew tears from the eyes of the multitude, who looked no farther into his merits than I did; but it was then a sort of school doctrine to regard our Monarch as a deity, as, in the former reign, it was to regard him as responsible in this world as well as in the next. But what gave Charles II. this peculiar possession of so many hearts was his affability,—a quality that goes farther with the greater part of mankind than many higher virtues. Even his indolent amusement of playing with his dogs, and feeding his ducks in St. James's Park, made the common people adore him, and overlook in him what in a prince of a different temper they would have otherwise regarded."

The death of the King was an event in the history of the school: the master enjoined the boys, on the form with Cibber, severally to compose a funeral oration for the occasion. This was a task so entirely new, that the other boys heard the proposal, and declined the work, as above their capacity. Of course, his essay was crude and simple enough—the chief topic was the affability of the King, arising out of his recollection of the circumstances alluded to. The oration was produced next morning: all the other boys pleaded their inability; but the master, accepting the excuse rather as a mark of their modesty than of their idleness, only seemed to punish them by setting him at the head of the form—a preferment dearly bought, for he led a most uncomfortable life for many a day among them, being jeered and laughed at by them all, as one who had betrayed the whole form, insomuch that scarcely one of them would keep his company; and though it procured for him favour from the master, the distinction only provoked their envy, and subjected him to treatment that would have frightened a boy of a meeker spirit. It, however, had not the effect of repressing his emulation, which, strangely enough, he calls stupidity, because he did not affect to be of a lower capacity than he was conscious of possessing.

On the 23rd of April following, being the coronation of the new King, the school petitioned for a holiday, to which the master agreed, provided any of the boys would write an English ode upon the occasion. Cibber proved the author of the ode, which he produced in about half an hour. It was as bad as could reasonably be expected; but it served to get the school a play-day, and to stimulate the vanity of the author; while it so irritated the envy of his school-fellows, that they left him out of the

party he had most a mind to be of in that day's recreation. Although Cibber has described these incidents of the boy's world amusingly, still the lesson to the man is impressive. Few have ever acquired any degree of distinction, without observing something of an alienation of heart produced by it among his contemporaries, especially among his early companions.

About the year 1687, Cibber was taken from school to stand at the election of children into Winchester College; and being, by his mother's side, a collateral descendant of William of Wykeham, the founder, his father, who knew as little of the world as artists in general do, imagined that advantage would be security enough for his success, and so sent him thither without recommendation or interest, but only naked merit, and a pompous pedigree in his pocket. Had he tacked a direction to his back, and sent him by the carrier to the mayor of the town, to be chosen member of Parliament there, he might have had just as much chance to have succeeded in the one as the other. But his father bought experience from his failure on this occasion, and afterwards took more care of Colley's brother, in recommending him to the College, by presenting a statue of the founder of his own making. This statue now stands over the school-door, and was so well executed, that it seemed to speak for its kinsman, and did so to good effect; for it was no sooner set up than the door of preferment was opened.

It was about this time that Cibber first imbibed an inclination for the stage, which, however, he durst not reveal; for, besides knowing that it would disoblige his father, he had no conception of any practicable means of making his way to it. He therefore suppressed the bewitching ideas of so sublime a station, and compounded

with his ambition, by adopting a lower scheme of getting the nearest way into the immediate life of a gentleman collegiate. At this period his father was engaged at Chatsworth by the then Earl of Devonshire, who was raising that princely place from Gothic to Classic magnificence, and Cibber pressed him by letter not to let him wait another year for an uncertain preferment at Winchester, but give him leave to go at once to the University. This was acceded to; but his father, unwilling to allow him to lie too long idling in London, sent for him down to Chatsworth, to be under his own eye, till he should be at leisure to carry him to Cambridge.

Before setting out on his journey, the nation fell in labour of the Revolution of 1688, the news being then just brought to London that the Prince of Orange had landed in the West. It thus happened that when Cibber came to Nottingham, he found his father in arms there among the forces which the Earl of Devonshire had raised. His father judged the season proper for a stripling to turn himself loose into the bustle of the world, and being too far advanced in years to endure the fatigues of a winter campaign, he entreated the Earl to accept his son in his stead. This was so well received, that his Lordship not only accepted his services, but promised his father that when affairs were settled he would provide for him. "At this crisis," says Cibber, with that vanity which runs through all he ever did or said, "it will be observed that the fate of King James, and of the Prince of Orange, and of myself, were all at once upon the anvil. Who knows," says he, "had I been sent to the University, but by this time that purer fountain might have washed my imperfections into a capacity of writing, instead of plays and annual odes, sermons and pastoral letters?"

He claimed at this period to be considered as one among those desperate thousands who, after a patience sorely tried, took arms under the banner of Necessity. Up to this time, all the incidents which Cibber has recorded of himself have been detailed. How he came to be one of those desperate thousands, or how his patience was sorely tried, is about as ludicrous a pretension as some of those *ex post facto* apologies of the managers, when a singer has happened to get a slight cold, or a player an invitation to a gentleman's table; "a bowl complaint," as old Rock of Edinburgh once said to the audience of Cooke, when that spirited player was unable to go through his part. In all the histories of empires, there is no one instance of so bloodless a Revolution as that of England in 1688. The whigs, the tories, princes, prelates, nobles, clergy, common people, and a standing army, were all unanimous. To have seen all England of one mind, is to have lived, as Cibber sagely says, "at a very particular juncture. Happy nation, who are never divided among themselves but when they have least to complain of!"

The philosophical sagacity of Cibber has always been undervalued. He appears at this time to have had a very correct opinion of the state of the nation; it accords with our own, which is, that from the time of the Restoration of Charles II. the anti-Stuart faction had lived in the ashes of the Revolution. I have long been of opinion, ever since I studied the details of Charles I.'s reign, that there always existed in England a faction adverse to the Stuart line; nor do I think it would be a difficult task to show, that in combination with the Puritans and Presbyterians, it was that faction which spirited on the malcontents of Charles I.'s time to the tragedies of his reign.

The contemporary writers of King James II.'s time sufficiently show that there was no lack of freedom of tongue at that period. Though the rod of arbitrary power was always shaking over them, with what freedom and contempt did the people in the open streets talk of his wild measures to make a whole Protestant nation Papists? and yet, in the height of security, the vulgar had no farther notion of any remedy for this evil than a presumption, that their numbers were too great to be mastered by his mere will and pleasure; that though he might be too hard for their laws, he would never be able to get the better of their nature; and that the attempt to drive all England into Popery and slavery was, as Cibber says, "only teaching an old lion to dance."*

The reflection of Cibber on this state of public affairs is the more remarkable, as it is precisely in sense and tenour similar to the opinion of the common people during the administration of Cardinal Wolsey in Henry VIII.'s time; and we are very much disposed to think that his remarks deserve more attention than they have ever received, for we well recollect that, on one occasion, when the late Mr. Whitbread attempted to introduce a Bill into the House of Commons, for the establishment in England of the parish-school system of Scotland, the preamble of which was to the effect, that the peculiar excellences of the Scottish character were owing to their national system of education, Mr. Wyndham, with more

* The lion was a favourite simile of Cibber. Booth used to tell a story of him, that he had introduced in one of his plays this generous beast in some island or country where lions do not grow. Being informed of the mistake, he cried, "Pr'ythee tell me where there is a lion; for, God's curse, if there be a lion in Europe, Asia, Africa, or America, I will not lose my simile."—*Champion*, May 6, 1740.

philosophical sagacity, showed that the Scottish system was an effect of their national character, and by his ingenious ridicule swept the Bill from the table. I, however, would only refer to Shakspeare's plays, if other proof were none, to demonstrate that the English have always had as good an idea and as firm a grasp of what they conceive to be their privileges as they have had since the Revolution. Liberty, in the English sense—that is, possession of property and security—owes its origin to the natural character of the people, and is not the fruit of any revolution; it is an innate and inherent principle. It may be that revolutions, such as that of 1688, or any other, may have sprung from the influence of this national feeling; but the feeling itself, that is, the resistance to oppression and the condemnation of arbitrary measures, is as natural to the English climate, as the temper of the bull-dog, which prompts both its growl and its bite. In a word, I am of those who cannot discern the great merits of the Revolution of 1688. The only effect it ever produced has been misrule, bloodshed, and all manner of revolutionary crimes in Ireland, consequent on making four-fifths of the wretched and ignorant inhabitants of that portion of the United Kingdom slaves of an inferior caste. The Revolution of 1688 was, no doubt, as compared with other revolutions, bloodless; but it was the parent of great guilt, and it cannot be too soon placed among the errors of nations degrading to human nature. However, all this is in much too tragical a tone for the life of such a person as "a poor player."

Cibber had not been many days at Nottingham, in the army of the Earl of Devonshire, when the news came that the Prince of Denmark, who was married to King James's daughter Anne, had deserted his father-in-law,

and was coming over to the Prince of Orange's party; and that the Princess Anne, justly fearing the indignation of her father at her consort's revolt, had withdrawn herself in the night from London, and was within half a day's journey of Nottingham. In this alarm the Earl of Devonshire's troops scrambled to arms, and having advanced some few miles on the London road, they met the Princess in a coach, attended only by the Lady Churchill, (afterwards the celebrated Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough,) whom they conducted into Nottingham amidst the acclamations of the people. The same night, all the noblemen and other persons of distinction then in arms with the Earl of Devonshire, had the honour to sup at her Royal Highness's table, which was then furnished, as all her necessary accommodations were, at the charge of his Lordship. In consequence of the noble guests at the table happening to be more in number than attendants out of livery could be found, Cibber, being well known to the Lord Devonshire's family, was requested by his Lordship's maître d'hotel to attend the Lady Churchill. Being so near the table he gives a most satisfactory account of the conversation which he overheard: it consisted of the important requests, "some wine or water,"—questions equally remarkable for their political wisdom and simplicity.

It appears that our predestined player fell in love on this occasion with the Lady Churchill, for it would be wrong to recall her to the recollection of the reader with any minor epithet. The account of his feelings is amusing, considering the relative state of the parties,—he the son of a stone-chipper, and she the loftiest lady of the greatest hero and statesman of the time. "The words, 'some wine and water,' I remember," says he, "came dis-

tinguished and observed to my ear, because they came from the fair guest whom I took such pleasure to wait on. Except at that single sound all my senses were collected into my eyes, which, during the whole entertainment, wanted no better amusement than of stealing now and then the delight of gazing on the object so near me. If so clear an emanation of beauty, such a commanding grace of aspect, struck me into a regard that had something softer than the most profound respect in it, I cannot see why I may not without offence remember it; since beauty, like the sun, must sometimes lose its power to choose, and will shine with equal warmth on the peasant and the courtier."

It would, however, be doing injustice to Cibber, who was not without gentlemanly delicacy, were we to stop here; for he adds, with something both of correct taste and good feeling; "I remember, about twenty years after, when the same lady had given the world four of the loveliest daughters that ever were gazed on, even after they were all nobly married, and were become the reigning toasts of every party of pleasure, their still lovely mother had at the same time her votaries, and her health very often took the lead in those involuntary triumphs of beauty. However presumptuous or impertinent these thoughts might have appeared at my first entertaining them, why may I not hope that my having kept them decently secret for full fifty years may be now a good round plea for their pardon? Were I now qualified to say more of this celebrated lady I should conclude it thus,—that she has lived to all appearances a peculiar favourite of Providence; that few examples can parallel the profusion of blessings which have attended so long a life of felicity. A person so attractive; a husband so

memorably great; an offspring so beautiful; a fortune so immense; and a title which, when royal favour had no higher to bestow, she only could receive from the Author of Nature,—that of a great-grandmother without grey hairs."

From Nottingham the troops marched to Oxford. Through every town they passed the people came out in some sort of array, with such rusty and rural weapons as they could hastily gather up, with acclamations of welcome and good wishes. After the public tranquillity had been secured by the accession of William and Mary to the throne, the troops were remanded back to Nottingham, where many of the officers received commissions to confirm them in their respective ranks; and such of the private men as chose to return to their homes were allowed their discharge. Cibber also received his; for not hearing his name mentioned in any of the new commissions, he thought it time to take leave of ambition, and to seek his fortune in some other field.

From Nottingham he returned to his father at Chatsworth, who thought a little court favour might help to give him a chance for saving the expense of maintaining him at the university. Accordingly, at his suggestion, Cibber drew up a petition in Latin to the Duke of Devonshire, entreating his Grace would be pleased to do something for him; and the Duke in reply requested him to come to London in the course of the winter, when he would make some provision for him.

Accordingly to London he went; but it was harder to know what he was really fit for, than to have got him any thing that was not fit for him. However, he commenced his first state of dependence, which lasted about five months; but in the interval he became wholly en-

chanted by the stage, and saw no other pleasure in any life but in that of an actor. On the stage alone he conceived there was a happiness preferable to all that courts or camps could offer; and there, let father and mother take it as they pleased, he was determined to fix his ultimate views. In saying this he frankly acknowledges that he had not much to complain of in the remissness of the Duke of Devonshire; on the contrary, he freely confesses that he believes his Grace's intentions towards him were only repressed by his own inconsiderate folly, for he was credibly informed by the gentlemen of his Grace's household, that they had heard him in their hearing talk of recommending him to the Secretary of State for the first proper vacancy in his office. The allurements of a theatre, however, were strong in his mind, and he never repented the rashness which threw him on the stage; on the contrary, he never ceased to think, that were it possible to remove the prejudice which custom has thrown on the profession of an actor, many a well-born younger brother and beauty of low fortune would gladly adorn the stage, rather than pass their lives away unheeded and forgotten.

A considerable part of Mr. Cibber's "Apology for his Life" is occupied with the condition in which he found the stage at the period he first appeared on it; and it must be confessed, that to judge of their merits by the applause of their contemporaries, the actors and actresses of that time were possessed of no ordinary talent; but, as I shall have to speak of the most distinguished of them separately, I may be readily excused from omitting here the different personages, however meritorious in their profession, who, without the skill and ingenuity of Cibber, would probably have in a great measure been

neglected: of himself he has, with his characteristic frankness and familiarity, which do not appear to have been uniformly well understood, acknowledged that he was nearly three quarters of a year before he obtained any regular engagement, and his reception at last was far from being flattering.

He was known only for some time by the name of Master Colley. After waiting a long time for the prompter's notice, he obtained the honour of carrying a message on the stage, in some play, to Betterton: whatever was the cause, he was so terrified that the scene was disconcerted by him. Betterton inquired, in some anger, who the young fellow was that committed the blunder. Downs replied, "Master Colley." "Then forfeit him." "Why, Sir," said the prompter, "he has no salary." "No?" said the old man: "why then put him down ten shillings a-week, and forfeit him five." And yet the despised player was destined to attain an eminent rank in his profession. It is true that he says, "Pay was the least of my concern; the joy, the privilege of every day seeing plays for nothing, were a sufficient consideration for the best of my services."

The first thing that enters into the head of a young player, is that of being a hero; but in this ambition poor Master Colley was snubbed by the insufficiency of his voice, his meagre person, and a dismal, pale complexion. What was most promising to him was the aptness of his ear; for he was soon allowed to speak justly. The first part in which he appeared with any glimpse of success was that of the chaplain, in *The Orphan* of Otway, and in it he received his first applause: his talent on this occasion attracted some degree of attention, and deservedly. Goodman, who had then retired from the stage, said the next

day, after looking earnestly at him and clapping him on the shoulder, " If he does not make a good actor, I'll be damned!" The surprise of being so commended by one who had been himself eminent on the stage, was more than Cibber could support—it took away his breath, and fairly drew tears into his eyes: Alexander of Macedon, or Charles of Sweden, at the head of their armies, was not so great nor so proud a man as he felt himself to be at that moment. " But I may give all my juvenile indiscretions to my reader at once." It was madness enough to break from the advice of parents to turn player; but what will be thought of matrimony, which, before he was two-and-twenty, he actually committed—when he had but twenty pounds a-year from his father, and twenty shillings a-week for his theatrical labours? This was not all—he turned poet too; in which, however, he had a better excuse—necessity: but his dramatic progress chiefly deserves our attention.

The Queen having commanded *The Double Dealer*, Kynaston happened to be unable to take his part of Lord Touchwood. In this exigency, Mr. Congreve, the author, advised the manager to give it to Cibber, if, at so short a warning, he would undertake it. The flattery of being so distinguished by so celebrated an author, and the honour to act before a Queen, made him blind to all difficulties. He accepted the part, was ready in it before he slept, and next day the Queen was present at the performance. After the play, Congreve complimented him on his endeavours; assured him that he had exceeded his expectations; and proved as good as his word, for his salary was by his influence from that time augmented; but soon after the actors and managers fell out of sorts, and a house divided against itself verified

the ancient proverb. However, the King interposed, and, under his Majesty's patronage, a party of the players, with Betterton at their head, were formed in opposition to the patentees.

It was in the year 1694 that the great war between the potentates of the drama raged with the stormiest fury; but the patentees were not able to take the field till Easter Monday following. On that occasion, Cibber wrote a prologue, for which he received two guineas; its chief advantage, however, consisted in the approbation with which it was received, and the improved light in which it showed him to the town.

In Shakspeare's time the nightly expenses for lights, &c. were but forty-five shillings, and having deducted this charge, the residue was divided into shares (forty in number) between the proprietors and the principal actors. In 1666 the profits arising from acting plays, masques, &c. at the King's Theatre, was divided into twelve shares and three quarters, of which Killigrew, the manager, had two and three quarters, which produced him about 250*l.* net per annum. In Sir William Davenant's company, from the time their new theatre was opened in Portugal-row, the receipts, after deducting the nightly expenses, were divided into fifteen shares, of which Davenant had ten, and the remainder was divided among the male members of his troop, according to their rank and merit. On the occasion of the great success which attended *Love for Love*, Congreve, besides his profits from this play, was allowed a share, but the amount of it is not now correctly known. These facts, though not of themselves relevant to the history of Colley Cibber, are important to that of the stage, and they have more on that account been preserved than with relation to him.

The quarrel between the players and the patentees was as fatal to the drama as to the unhappy actors: all the honours of the theatre were treated with contempt, and became the spoil of ignorance and self-conceit. Shakspeare was defaced and distorted in every character, insomuch that it was a saying of the time, that Hamlet and Othello lost, in one hour, all their good sense, their dignity, and reputation. Nothing could more painfully afflict the judicious spectator than to see with what rude confidence those habits which actors of real merit left behind them, were assumed by the vulgar pretenders who disgraced them! Cibber only escaped from thus ministering to the corruption of the public taste by being supposed inadequate to fill any of the leading characters. His patient study could not, however, continue long unnoticed; and an occurrence took place highly illustrative of the vocation of the players, and the great importance of which trivial matters are to little men.

It happened, on a Saturday morning, that the patentees received notice that Betterton's party were to enact *Hamlet* on the Tuesday after. A march was in consequence resolved to be stolen on the enemy, and *Hamlet* was on that night given out to be acted on Monday. The notice of this soon reached the other party, who, on hearing it, shortened their first orders, and resolved also to act *Hamlet* on Monday, so that when their Monday's bills came out, the consternation of Cibber's friends was terrible. In this dilemma, the play was again changed; *The Old Bachelor* was substituted, and Cibber played, for the first time, Alderman Fondlewife, with much applause. It was on this occasion that he first eminently distinguished himself as a player, and from this date gradually rose in his profession.

After his appearance in *The Old Bachelor*, he produced his first comedy, *Love's Last Shift*, which, by the friendly commendations of Southern, was brought upon the stage. In this comedy, Cibber himself played the part of Sir Novelty with so much éclat, that the Lord Chamberlain of the time said it was the best first play that any author, in his memory, had produced; and that for a young fellow to show himself such an actor and author in one day, was something very extraordinary. His next part was in Lord Foppington, in *The Relapse* of Sir John Vanbrugh; and the year following he appeared in Æsop, in the comedy of that name, by the same accomplished author. But his triumph in these parts only served to convince him that he was not destined to attain eminence in tragedy; for although he appeared at different times, with considerable approbation, in the characters of Iago, Wolsey, Syphax, Richard the Third, &c. he was conscious that he did not possess a requisite tragedy voice. So strong,—so very nearly indispensable is that one article, voice, in the forming of a good tragedian, that an actor may want any other qualification whatsoever, and yet have a better chance for applause than with all the skill in the world, if his voice is not equal to the part.

It merits notice, however, that in the tragic characters just mentioned, Cibber has been allowed to possess superior talent,—not, however, in the forcible enunciation of what he had to deliver, so much as in the propriety with which he did it; and he makes an observation which cannot be too often repeated. "These characters"—he alludes to those just named—"are generally better written, thicker sown with sensible reflections, and come so much nearer to common life and nature than characters

of admiration, that I sometimes could not help smiling at those dainty actors that were too squeamish to swallow them." It is not surely what we act, but how we act the part allotted to us, that speaks our intrinsic worth. In real life, the wise man or the fool, be he prince or peasant, will be equally the fool or the wise man.

The next attempt of Cibber at dramatic composition was *Love in a Riddle*,—an opera got up expressly in imitation of Gay's *Beggar's Opera*, but it did not succeed.

Besides being an original dramatic author, Colley Cibber had very considerable merit as an adapter of old plays to the taste of his own time. In this he had a strict eye, in many things, to Jeremy Collier's "View of the Stage," &c. published about the year 1697; at the same time his approbation of that popular writer's sentiments was not admitted to their full extent; Sir Richard Steele, especially in No. VIII. of the Tatler, has been quoted as affording a more just description of the stage, and yet the truth probably lay between them. Steele recommends the stage as an easy and agreeable method of making a polite and moral gentry, which would end, as he thought, in rendering the rest of the people regular in their conduct, and ambitious of laudable undertakings. "The business of plays," observes Collier, "is to recommend virtue and discountenance vice; to show the uncertainty of human greatness, and the unhappy conclusions of violence and injustice; to expose the singularities of pride; to repress affectation; to make falsehood contemptible; and, in short, to bring infamy and neglect upon every bad thing that deserves their visitation." In so far it therefore cannot be said that there was any great difference between the principles of Collier and of

Steele; but it could not be maintained that they were both right. They regarded the stage too narrowly; for, after all that may be said of its moral influence, unquestionably it ought only to be regarded as an amusement. It may teach moral lessons, and inculcate truth by example, but it does not seem to be legitimately following its natural course when it assumes the character of a moral pulpit, and confines its views only to the teaching of exemplary lessons.

Still, however, Collier's work produced a great impression, and had its due effect, even at Court. Indecencies were no longer regarded as wit; and such was the influence of his exhortation, that by degrees the fair sex came to fill the boxes on the first night of a new comedy without bashfulness and without censure; so strict was the watch which the Master of the Revels, who licensed all plays for the stage, contrived to keep over them. Indeed, he carried his authority in this respect to an extremity that argued but little for a fair conception of his duties, and sometimes exposed him to ridicule and satire: he would strike out whole scenes of an immoral character, though it were shown to be reformed or punished. Still, however, in the end he so far succeeded, that many of those objections which, in the days of Steele and Collier, were justly alleged against the drama, have been removed; and if the stage has since not been improved in vigour, it is undoubtedly no longer objectionable on the score either of unchaste language or uncomely action.

Cibber tells an amusing anecdote of what happened to himself when he presented his version of *King Richard the Third*, as altered from Shakspeare, to receive licence of the Master of the Revels. The whole first act was expunged without sparing a line of it. This extraordinary

conduct induced Cibber to apply to him for a speech or two, that the other four acts might limp on with a little less absurdity. No; he had an objection to the whole act, and among other reasons he assigned was, that the distresses of King Henry the Sixth, who is killed by Richard, would put weak people too much in mind of King James, who was then living in France, and whom the nation had banished for his tyranny! This arbitrary folly did not, however, last many years; for by the patent which George I. granted to Sir Richard Steele and his assigns, of which Cibber was one, the patentees were freed from the thraldrom of the Master of the Revels, and made sole judges of what plays might be proper for the stage, without submitting them to the approbation of any other person whatever. But it ought to be mentioned that this exemption was soon followed by a new law, by which the power of licensing plays was given to a person duly authorised—a law which occasioned an universal murmur in the nation, and was complained of in the public papers; in all the coffee-houses of London it was treated as unjust, and contrary to the liberties of the people.

When the season came round, and the playhouses were opened, Covent Garden began with three new pieces, which had been approved of by the Lord Chamberlain. The house was crowded; but the best play in the world would not have succeeded that first night. The action was interrupted almost as soon as begun by a cabal who had resolved to overthrow the first effort of this act. The farce in question was damned—the actors were driven from the stage—and happy was it for the author that he did not fall into the hands of the audience. It was at first imagined that the rioters were apprentices,

clerks, and mechanics, but it was afterwards ascertained that they belonged to several grave bodies—that they lived in colleges, and were, in fact, members of the law.

The players were not, however, dismayed; they stuck up bills for a new piece, and there was the same crowding to the theatre the next night. The author having by judicious flattery tamed this wild audience, the piece was allowed to proceed. It was a farce, in which the French were laughably caricatured; indeed, to such a degree, and so much in unison with the popular opinion, that the damnation of the piece was forgotten: I believe since that time the law has been allowed to take its course.

In no part of his career was Colley Cibber ever otherwise than an actor of promise. He was at all times esteemed as a clever and judicious performer; but he never fully realized the expectations of his friends: still he was undoubtedly a person of much merit, and in the "Apology for his Life" he has left behind him one of the most agreeable works in the English language—for, although it abounds in lively gossiping, it is nevertheless a book which contains many able and acute observations, with an air of agreeable trifling: we in vain look for his competitor.

In 1707 he was esteemed by Mr. Rich the patentee, as an actor of some consequence, but rather for his excellence generally, than for any particular distinction; and in the ensuing year, when Colonel Brett, who married the Countess of Macclesfield (the mother of Savage), became one of the patentees of Drury Lane, Cibber joined him. His life, as a player, had even more than the common monotony of a player's life, and he had, chiefly

owing to his good temper, fewer of the petty intrigues which make up so much of its importance and bustle, than are to be met with in the adventures of less eminent men.

In 1711 he became united, as joint patentee, with Collier, Wilks, and Dogget, in the management of Drury Lane; and, afterwards, in a like partnership with Booth, Wilks, and Sir Richard Steele. During this period, which did not end till 1731, the English stage, in point of performance, attained a pitch of surpassing splendour; but about that period the principal performers died or retired, and Cibber sold out his part of the patent, and quitted the stage as a business. It could not be said that he entirely retired, for he occasionally played some of his best parts, and was rewarded by being paid fifty guineas per night — the highest salary ever given till that time to any English player. In 1745, though upwards of seventy-four, he appeared as Pandulph, in his own drama, called *Papal Tyranny*, being an alteration of Shakspeare's *King John*—and which, notwithstanding his great age, he is said to have even then performed with great spirit and preternatural vigour.

It has been supposed, but without warranty from fact, that his promotion to the laurel in 1730, on the death of Mr. Eusden, had a material effect in inducing him to leave the stage; the result, however, of his occasional appearance afterwards refutes this conjecture; for, by this time, he was well aware that he could not hope to attain greater eminence by continuing, and his fortune was adequate to his wants. After he quitted the stage, he passed the remainder of his time in ease and good-humour, and died on the 12th of December, 1757, at Islington, where he had recently completed his eighty-

sixth year. His end was without pain; and, considering the difficulties he overcame, the honour he acquired, and his long, gay, and happy life, he fairly deserves to be quoted as an instance of a felicitous and fortunate adventurer.

The character of Cibber has not always received uniform justice, and especially in his difference with Pope, the poet, who, to uncommon shrewdness, united a spiteful and vindictive nature. He, in fact, kept the laugh constantly against Pope, and preserved, in opposition to his malevolence and spleen, a gaiety and good-humour that was only the more to be envied as it could seldom be disturbed. There was, in fact, at that time two kinds of literary men—those who were properly connected with the stage, and those who trusted more to the press. Cibber and Pope were at the head of the respective parties; and, in addition to personal rivalry, they had each the rancour of their different sects. It must, however, be admitted that Cibber had always the superiority in temper and cheerfulness; and that, in both of these enviable qualities, if the poet could occasionally boast of saying the more brilliant witticisms, the player more regularly maintained a joyous and gentlemanly deportment. Few men had more personal friends, and perhaps a greater number of undeserved enemies; but the malevolence of his adversaries had little effect on his spleen: he seemed, indeed, truly of Sir Harry Wildair's temperament. Nor did it seem within the power of age and infirmity to get the better of that self-satisfied humour which accompanied him throughout life: even in his latter years, when in the midst of a circle of persons much his juniors, through his easy good-nature, liveliness in conversation, and a peculiar happiness he enjoyed in telling

a story, he was the very life of the party. Besides these high companionable qualities, he was celebrated for his benevolence and humanity, and by his unwearied charity, showed how truly he possessed a good and tender heart.

I have already described his person, as it is transmitted to us by himself. His chief excellence lay in the walk of fops and feeble old men in comedy; in the former, he does not appear to have been excelled in any period before him, and not often surpassed since. He has spoken of his merits with great moderation; and there is good reason to believe that he has too slightingly touched his talents as a tragedian. Altogether, he passed a long life respectably; he surmounted many difficulties in the course of it; and he has added to the stock of our harmless literature so much, that he is fairly entitled to be considered as one of those gentle and gracious spirits which long minister to the mitigation of care.

## THOMAS DOGGET.

Thomas Dogget, a native of the Emerald Isle, was born in Castle Street, Dublin, and made his first theatrical attempt in that city. Not meeting with the encouragement he was conscious of deserving, he came over to England, and joined a company of strollers, with whom, however, he did not remain long, being induced to connect himself with the Drury Lane players, among whom he was universally approved in all the characters he undertook to perform, particularly in the part of Solon in D'Urfey's *Marriage Hater*, in the year 1692; in Fondlewife, in *The Old Bachelor*, and Ben, in *Love for Love*, he had no superior: indeed, it is said that Congreve wrote the latter work with a view to his manner of acting.

When the new theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields was built, under the auspices of Mr. Betterton, Dogget withdrew from Drury Lane; but so long as he remained with that party he was esteemed an excellent actor. He continued with them till the removal of the company to the Haymarket, when he returned to assist at Betterton's benefit in April, 1709.

Downs is lavish in his praise of Dogget about this period; and Steele, in the Tatler, No. CXX., terms him the best of comedians. He was, in the general opinion of the world, an original actor; a close copier of Nature;

and so sensible of what his natural abilities could effect, that he never ventured upon any part to which they were not well adapted. He is praised for the exactitude with which he dressed his characters, and also in colouring the different degrees of age,—a circumstance which led Sir Godfrey Kneller to tell him one day, that he was a better painter than him. "I," said Sir Godfrey, "can only copy Nature from the originals before me, while you vary them at pleasure, and yet preserve the likeness."

He was a little, lively, smart man; and there is a portrait of him in the collection of Mr. Mathews, by which, though his countenance appears to have been far from handsome, he seems animated and agreeable. In company, he was modest and cheerful, and his natural intelligence was of a very high order.

He was master of a strolling company for several years, both with celebrity to himself and comfort to them. In a word, he was undoubtedly a respectable but self-willed man, and this peculiarity led him to retire at an early age from the theatre, as will be explained when I come to speak of that event.

Among other whims which he cherished with particular pertinacity, was a belief or affectation that comedy is superior to tragedy; and in one respect he was right, for undoubtedly it aspires to being nearer nature, and tragedy certainly is allowed to say many fine things that nature never spoke in the same phrases and situations. But though there was some justice and much plausibility in his opinion, his interest taught him that the public had a taste as well as himself, and that taste he generally consulted in preference to his own. It was only where he was thwarted that he was obstinate. He could not, however, look with patience on the costly trains and

plumes of tragedy; and when he found his singularity could no longer oppose the expense, he still refused to retract his opinion, insomuch that, rather than concede in any way to the more prevalent notion, he at last, in maintenance of his theory, left his old friends, and went over to the other theatre. Considering, however, the character of the man, perhaps some other cause besides influenced him.

His first part at the Theatre Royal was Lory, in *The Relapse,* an arch valet, after the French cast, pert and familiar. It suited, however, so ill with Dogget's dry humour, that, upon the second day, he desired it might be given to another, and it was transferred accordingly to an actor who did the conception of the author better justice.

Colley Cibber describes Dogget as immovable in his opinion, in whatever he thought was right or wrong, and that he always set up for a theatrical patriot—was turbulent under every description of dramatic government—and so warm in the pursuit of his interest, that he generally outran it. He was three times unemployed at any theatre, from being unable to bear, in common with others, those accidents which, among the players, are unavoidable.

But, although Dogget was often a disagreeable companion, yet his obstinacy at times assumed the deportment of virtue. From a severe exactness in his nature, he was often unhappy, especially in situations where irregularity too often prevails; but, in his private affairs, he was always esteemed an uncommonly prudent man. When he returned to act under the patent in Drury Lane, he took unusual care to have his articles binding: having, however, afterwards some reason to think that

the patentees did not deal with him as they ought, he quitted the stage and would act no more; but the patentee who, from other people's judgment, knew his value, thought that the sure way would be to solicit his return by the authority of the Lord Chamberlain. An application was accordingly made to his Lordship to bring up Dogget from Norwich, where he then was. The actor, who had money in his pocket and freedom at his heart, was not in the least intimidated by this formidable summons. He obeyed it with particular cheerfulness, and entertained his fellow-traveller, the messenger, all the way with much humour—for he could be often a cheerful companion. Upon his arrival in town, he applied to Lord Chief Justice Holt, and that eminent person took particular notice of the application, for he not only discharged Dogget, but in open court censured the extravagance which had been committed in the process, under the name of the law. The agents, finding that they had not acted with due circumspection, altered their manner, were mollified into milder proceedings, and pacified him in the best way they could.

Although, in this instance, the oppression of authority was not resented by Dogget as such, still the character of the transaction was not changed. With a person of less firmness, it might have been productive of evil, and therefore ought to be considered by its tendency, rather than its effect. At the same time, there can be no doubt that the Lord Chamberlain was not actuated by any malicious enmity: that he conceived his office invested him with the power he exercised, is certain; but, with a jealousy of authority which can never be too wakefully watched, such encroachments should be ever properly, according to law, resisted.

In 1708, Swiny, who was sole director of the Opera, had the Lord Chamberlain's permission to enter into a private treaty with such of the united actors in Drury Lane as might be thought fit to head a company, under their own management, and be sharers with him in the Haymarket. Dogget was one of the party preferred. Swiny was, however, removed, and Dogget, with those who were joined with him, continued in the management. In this state matters remained with the stage for upwards of twenty years after, with comparatively little other alteration farther than Booth being admitted at the end of that period into a share, and Dogget retiring with indignation.

At that period, while Dogget was in the management, the actors were in the vigour of their capacities, and their prosperity enabled the manager to pay liberally. He was naturally an economist—kept their expenses and accounts in good order, and within well-regulated bounds. In the twenty years, their affairs were so prosperously directed by him, that they never had a creditor who had occasion to come twice for his bill: every Monday morning discharged the concern of all demands, before the managers took a shilling for their own use. Colley Cibber calls it "that firm establishment of the theatre," and not undeservedly; for twenty years of a regular and prosperous administration in any branch of human affairs, is more than belongs to the average prudence of a joint management.

In addition to punctuality in their money transactions, chiefly owing to the natural regularity of Dogget's character, a spirit of liberality ran thro' gh all their proceedings, alike commendable for its effects, and for the honourable principles of the players. During this golden

age of the theatre, the patentees never asked an actor, nor were desired by them, to sign any written agreement whatsoever—at least, Colley Cibber says so, to the best of his recollection. The rate of their respective salaries were only entered on their daily pay-list—which plain record was regarded as ample security. Where an honest meaning is mutual, confidence will be bond enough on both sides. Much, however, must still be allowed to fortune; for, had their professional endeavours not been successful, such punctuality and free dealing could not have been indulged.

Still, it must be allowed to have been an agreeable state of things; but it was not always exempt from those cross accidents incident to human affairs. The hazards which the managers ran, and the difficulties they combated, in bringing their system to perfection, were occasionally forgotten. Ease and plenty had, by habitual enjoyment, lost their novelty; and the amount of salaries seemed rather diminished than increased by the extraordinary gains of the performers. While the actors had sometimes this malcontent mode of thinking, happy was it for the managers that their united interest was inseparably the same, and that their own skill stood so high that, if the whole body of the other performers had deserted them, it would have been easier for the managers to have recruited their ranks, than for the deserters to have found better leaders. In this distinction lay the strength and glory of the stage. The managers being actors, was an advantage to their government, which all former managers, who were only idle gentlemen, wanted.

But, although it must be allowed that, at the period alluded to, the affairs of the theatre were very admirably conducted, still it is not to be supposed that wiser men

might not have done better; for, as they could not always govern themselves, there were seasons when they were not fit to govern others. It was, however, a happy period; and both actors and managers were in the possession of prosperity and comparative content. The polite world, too, by their decent attention, their sensible taste, and their generous encouragement of poets and players, saw that the stage was, indeed, capable of becoming, what the judicious of all ages thought it might be—the most rational plan that could be formed to dissipate, with innocence, the cares of life—to allure the ill-inclined from their evil meditations—and to give the leisure hours of business and of virtue instructive recreation.

But to return to the even tenour of our narrative.—One of those occasional little disturbances, that jarred without destroying the harmony of the theatre, will give a better idea of what they were, than any more formal description. It happened that two uncelebrated actors came over from Dublin, and Wilks, with his customary munificence, received them generously, and provided for their immediate appearance on the boards of Drury Lane. But this alacrity roughened Dogget into a storm; and he looked upon the hospitable haste of Wilks as injustice to himself and Colley Cibber, the other manager —in which, however, Cibber took no part, nor yielded to any spleen. Dogget grew intractable, and Cibber was compelled to interfere. He requested Dogget to consider, that he must be as much hurt by the vanity of Wilks's behaviour towards his Irish friends as he could possibly be; but, after all, though he was a little kind to them, it amounted to no more than letting the town see that the parts the Irish players were shown in, had been

better done by those to whom they more properly belonged. This judicious counselling had its due effect, but Dogget did not altogether appear to give into it: he wore still the aspect of uneasiness. "Wilks," said he, invidiously, "you know, will go any length to make the benefit he has promised his friends a good day, and may whisper the door-keepers to give them the ready money taken, and return the account in such tickets only as the actors have not themselves disposed of." But we must not investigate too curiously the arcana of the profession, nor think we do justice to human nature by looking too sensitively at the transactions of the players. Money is not the primary motive with all men; but it is so with many, and was so with Dogget. He, like other men, regarded not the honour of distinction in his profession as the sole reward of his merit, but rather his profession as a means to affluence. Without we carefully bear this in mind, we shall be constantly liable to misconstrue his conduct. He was in all things a respectable, painstaking, money-making man: he would have been so in any capacity of life: the stage was with him only an easier way to opulence than any other, and his whole habits were formed accordingly.

However, whether it had come to pass that the trick was played which he had suspected, certain it is, that the ready money accounted for by the door-keepers fell ten pounds short of that which the Irish actors had engaged to pay for their benefit; and Cibber, in his wish to preserve all things peaceably, paid the ten pounds out of his own pocket. Here it might have been supposed the matter would end, no one, in fact, having any cause to complain save only Cibber; but it was not so, for Wilks was offended at the interference, and inquired what was meant by doing

as Cibber had done. In this, to do only justice to his co-partner, he was frankly and manfully answered, by explaining to him what Dogget had said, and how he (Cibber) pledged his word that the house should not suffer from the benefit allowed to their Irish visitors. On hearing this, instead of being pacified, and properly appreciating the motives by which his co-partner was actuated, he burst into a violent rage, and as men commonly do in that situation, talked a great many absurd things. In the end, however, the business was made up, and no one was the sufferer but Cibber. Dogget, it must be owned, bore these disasters tolerably well; for, having more money, he had less need of philosophy than his friends.

It does not appear that any particular event deserving of notice occurred in the fortunes of Dogget till *Cato* was brought out, and Booth had, for the elegance of his performance, received the renowned fifty guineas which had been collected for him in the boxes. On that occasion, Dogget suggested to the other managers that they also should make a similar present to Booth. "This," he observed, "would recommend the liberal spirit of the management to the town, and might secure Booth more firmly to their interests,—the skill of the best actor never having received such a reward in one day before."

Some time after, during which there had been a professional excursion to Oxford, Booth solicited to be admitted into the management; and towards the managers it must be allowed that the Lord Chamberlain acted judiciously, inasmuch as he declined any direct interposition, but left the whole matter to be equitably adjusted by the parties themselves.

Wilks thought, to set a good value upon their stock

was the only way of coming to an equivalent; but Dogget said he had no mind to part with any of his property, and therefore would not set a price upon his interest at all. In the mean time Cibber reminded them, that they only held the licence under which they performed during pleasure, and that Booth, by the style in which he played *Cato*, had won the favour of the Tories, and was then under the special protection of a Secretary of State,—a power with whom it would be imprudent to attempt any contest, with many other arguments to the same effect.

Notwithstanding the good sense, practically speaking, of Cibber's remarks, Dogget would not hear him, but walked up and down, obstinate in his own opinion, and finally declared, that nothing but the law should make him part with his property, and immediately left the room: Booth, nevertheless, was admitted into the co-partnership, while Dogget still continued to demand his full third share of the profits. After many ineffectual endeavours to bring him back, he continued firm in his independence, and appealed to the Vice-Chamberlain, to whom the adjustment of these theatrical differences was committed; and he, after hearing the case, adjudicated in Dogget's favour, even though Wilks and Cibber contended that their refractory friend ought not to have withdrawn himself from the performance, and remonstrated on the subject with the Vice-Chamberlain. Dogget, however, without flinching from the resolution he had taken,—being a rich man, and able to stand a brush, —was, in the end, compelled to file a bill in Chancery; and the result, after two years of litigation, was, that he had fourteen days allowed him to make his election, whether he would return to the stage as usual; but he declaring, by his counsel, that he would rather quit it,

he was decreed six hundred pounds for his share in the property, with fifteen per cent. interest from the date of the new licence, in which the name of Booth was included. By this decree, when he had paid his lawyer's bill, he scarcely got one year's purchase of what he had been offered.

After the lawsuit, Dogget could not endure the sight of Wilks or Cibber, although it was his misfortune to meet with them almost daily, at Button's Coffee-house, so celebrated in the Tatler, and which Addison, Steele, Pope, and other gentlemen of various merits, made their constant rendezvous. But an incident, dramatic in its character, tended at last to reconcile him to Cibber, who had conducted the lawsuit, and was, in consequence, not on speaking terms with him. Their reciprocal silence was often laughed at by their acquaintances, one of whom carried his jesting upon it so far, that when Cibber was at some distance from town, he wrote to him an account of Dogget's death. This afforded Cibber an opportunity of speaking in reply of his merits, which had the effect of softening him to a reconciliation, for the letter was shown to Dogget, and led to what I have mentioned. One day sitting over against him at the same Coffee-house, though they never exchanged a single word, Dogget graciously extended his arm for a pinch of Cibber's snuff, who asked him how he liked it. With a slow hesitation, naturally assisted by his action in taking the snuff, he replied: "Umph! the best,—umph!—I have tasted a great while."

After a few days of these coy, feminine compliances on his side, they grew into a more conversable temper, and at last Cibber begged him to tell him his real dislike, and the cause of his enmity; but all he would confess came

from him in half sentences and innuendoes. "No," said he, "I have not taken any thing particularly ill, but were others to dispose of my property as they pleased? If you had stood out as I did, Booth might have paid a better price for it. You were too much afraid of the Court,—but that 's all over now. There were other things in the playhouse,—no man of spirit.—In short, to be always provoked by a trifling wasp,—a vain,—shallow —A man would sooner beg his bread than bear it. You can play with a bear or let him alone, but I could not let him lay his paws upon me without being hurt,—you did not feel him as I did;—and for a man to be cutting of throats upon trifles at my time of day! If I had been as covetous as he thought me, maybe I might have borne it as well as you; but I would not be a Lord of the Treasury, if such a temper as Wilks's were to be at the head of it."

Having thus explained the true reason of his quarrel with his brother managers, it only remains to notice his last appearance on the scene. It was for the benefit of Mrs. Porter, in *The Wanton Wife;* and it was commonly supposed that he had himself offered to come forward, as an inducement for the new managers to propose terms to him, but they did not. His appearance was only considered by them in compliment to the lady, and they did not avail themselves of the hint. Still, when he died, they confessed, that, take him for all in all, he was the most diligent, most laborious, and most useful actor seen upon the stage in a long course of years.

By working in the funds, and by frugality in the application of his income, he amassed considerable property at the time of his retirement, with which he enjoyed himself till his death, at Eltham, in Kent, on the 22nd of

September 1721. In his political principles he was firm and unbending; and, to mark his veneration for the House of Hanover, he left a waterman's badge and coat to be rowed for on the first of August,—the anniversary of its accession to the throne of these kingdoms. This festival is still continued, and the expense is defrayed by the interest of a certain sum sunk for that purpose. I ought, perhaps, to add, that he possessed some literary taste, but in that respect he was not eminent, and his original education had been neglected.

# BARTON BOOTH.

It cannot be questioned that Barton Booth was in his day an actor of very considerable merit, but owing to an accidental circumstance he acquired a higher degree of celebrity than he was justly entitled to. Not but that he was at all times actuated by a strenuous desire to excel,—for few men have been more enthusiastic in the pursuit of renown than he was from the beginning of his professional career. There was, however, a degree of mediocrity impressed upon him which set alike at defiance both his natural endowments and the assiduity with which he cultivated them, insomuch that, while he omitted no opportunity by which distinction might be obtained, he rarely reached that eminence which he never failed to seek.

He was descended from an honourable family, anciently settled in the county palatine of Lancaster, and allied to the Earls of Warrington, upon whose barony of De la Mere he is said to have had a contingent claim. He was the third and youngest son of John Booth, Esq. a gentleman of a competent fortune, but which he so much impaired by mismanagement, that he was obliged to leave the country, and to live in Westminster, where he hoped, by interest and application, to have his children provided for. Barton, who was born in 1681, and had just attained his third year at the time of this journey, was sent to

Westminster school in 1690, then governed by the celebrated Dr. Busby, under whom he received the rudiments of his education, afterwards completed by his successor.

He was early distinguished for the liveliness of his genius and the quickness of his fancy; indeed, he soon evinced so strong a tendency to learning in general, that before he had completed his twelfth year he had attracted the notice of the master by the extent and precocity of his attainments. With Horace, for whom he felt a strong predilection, he was remarkably familiar, and delighted much in the study of the other Latin poets, the finest passages of whose works he with great pains imprinted on his memory. He had, besides, such a peculiar propriety and judicious emphasis in the repetition of them, assisted by so fine a voice and such a natural elegance of action, that he became the admiration of the whole school, and won the particular applause of Dr. Busby, who had himself an early predilection for the stage, in the performance of a part in *The Royal Slave*, a play written by William Cartwright.

In consequence of the superior talent which Booth exhibited in these declamations, when the time came round, according to annual custom, that a Latin play was to be performed, he was selected for the capital part of Pamphilus in the *Andria*, and so powerful was the impression which his efforts produced, that he drew the universal applause of all the spectators; and he has himself confessed that this circumstance first fired his young breast with theatrical ambition. His father intended him for the pulpit, but he was himself so determined to gratify his own inclinations, which were now fixed on the stage, that when he arrived at the age of seven-

teen, and the time approached when he must be taken from school to be sent to the university, he determined to run any risk rather than enter on a course of life so unsuitable to the vivacity of his disposition. Accordingly, when he was removed from Westminster to Trinity College, Cambridge, he had not been in the university any considerable time, when a strolling company of players came to Cambridge, with whom he was disposed to try his talents. The oftener he visited the playhouse, the more he admired the performance; and, at length, growing tired at the restraint laid upon the students in colleges, he agreed with the master of the company, and went off with him, without taking notice to any body of his intention.

When the news of this elopement reached London, his mother, whose darling in particular he had always been, was so surprised and grieved, that she fell into a violent fever, which had almost carried her out of the world. His father was also so much astonished that nobody expected he would retain his senses; the whole family were in the greatest confusion imaginable, and messengers were sent out in all directions, but he had concealed his name, and every inquiry proved abortive.

In the mean while, young Booth so far exceeded his companions in their art, that they began not only to envy him, but took all the means they possibly could to discourage him. The ladies, however, having the ear of the master, turned the invidia of his detractors to his advantage, until at last he became the hero of the company. Wherever they came, the eyes of all were fixed upon the unknown gentleman, who was everywhere a great favourite, especially with the young ladies, both because he performed the parts of distressed lovers, and

was involved himself in some romantic mystery. In this manner the summer passed pleasantly, and much, no doubt, to his satisfaction; but, alas! such grasshopping was not destined to last all the year round: while the party were performing at Bury, in Suffolk, an adventure happened which scattered the whole party like chaff before the wind.

One of the players, having a design upon the daughter of a neighbouring justice, persuaded her to accept an invitation to his lodgings on the following evening. Overjoyed with his success, and meeting some of his companions, he went to play hazard with them, when malicious Fortune turned up the dice on the wrong side, so that in a little time all the money he had provided to procure an elegant supper for the lady was lost, and he was driven to his wit's end for the means to entertain her. At last he plucked up courage, and borrowed from his landlady. Miss comes according to her appointment; is well pleased with her company and supper; and the landlady is to be well rewarded for her kindness,—believing her lodger would patch up a wedding with the justice's daughter, and that her fortune would wipe off the score. Instead of that, however, the gentleman gives Miss a drop too much; persuades her to rob her father, and to take a ramble along with him. The silly girl, after a few foolish excuses, came into the proposal; and her father being from home that evening, immediately put the design into execution; went home, rifled the old gentleman's strong-box, returned to her spark, and marched off double quick.

Next day the justice missed his daughter, the old woman began to think herself bit by the player, and, between them, they put the whole town in an uproar. The

players, in revenge, were banished, — nay, threatened with the house of correction; and they were all so frightened, that each of them made the best of his own way alone, leaving their stock behind them, and glad to escape so well.

About half a dozen of the scattered actors attempted to perform in the neighbouring villages, till they were reduced so low that Booth resolved to return home; and being in want of cash and clothes, he came through wet and dry to London, where he was, however, kindly received by his family. Great rejoicings took place on the prodigal's return; the fatted calf was killed, and all delinquencies forgotten.

But Barton's predilection for the stage was not at all quelled: he hired himself to one Mrs. Mins, and under her tuition acquired great renown at Bartholomew Fair, in consequence of which he was recommended to Drury Lane, for permission to appear at that theatre; but Betterton declined to grant it, from a fear of offending the noble family to which he was allied. Upon this refusal, he formed some acquaintance with Ashbury, the Dublin manager, then in London looking out for recruits, with whom he formed an engagement, stole away again from his friends, and went over to Ireland a friendless adventurer, in June 1698.

Ambition, whatever shape it assumes, has, in general, some redeeming feature; though, in its noblest form, it may be, after all, but a wild heaping-up of many faculties for the consummation of a single object, like the Egyptian pyramids, whose materials, if widely dispersed, would have constructed much grander monuments of wealth and power than the works in which they appear. Booth, gifted with fine talents, improved by education, and pos-

sessed of great personal influence, by forsaking the path that would have easily conducted him to honour, and, devoting all to the illustration of an art held to be ignoble, he forfeited his rank as a gentleman. His talents in his adopted profession were compared " to a god kissing carrion,"—an orb that rolled from its native circuit,

" Swings blind, and blackening in the moonless air."

He made his first appearance on the Dublin stage as Oroonoko, in which he came off with great approbation; but an odd accident rendered his performance laughable. It being very warm weather, as he waited to go on in the last scene of the play, he inadvertently wiped his face, so that, on entering, he amused the audience by appearing with a pie-bald physiognomy.

Ashbury, a generous-hearted man, and devoted to his profession, was so pleased by his success in the character of Oroonoko, that he made him a present of five guineas,—an opportune donation, for Booth was at the time reduced to his last shilling.

He continued two years with Ashbury, during which he reconciled himself to his friends, and rose to considerable eminence; but growing dissatisfied with his situation, he returned to England, and, under the auspices of Lord Fitzharding, was introduced to Betterton, who, with great kindness, took him under his care, and augured hopefully of the powers which he was soon enabled to unfold.

Booth made his first appearance about Christmas, 1701, as Maximus, in Lord Rochester's *Valentinian;* and though associated in this play with Betterton, Verbruggen, and Mrs. Barry, the great stars of that age, his merit was so distinguished, that his reception exceeded his

own most sanguine expectations. His schoolfellow Rowe soon after produced his tragedy of *The Ambitious Stepmother*, in which, in the part of Artaban, he established himself as only inferior to Betterton; and Pyrrhus, in *The Distressed Mother*, was another part in which he shone without a rival.

While Booth was gradually advancing to the pinnacle of his profession, the stage experienced a variety of those vicissitudes to which, while governed by individual caprice, it will always be subjected. There is, perhaps, no situation so arduous, in the whole circle of public amusements, as that of the managers of the metropolitan theatres; and yet, when we look to the manner in which the office has been generally filled, it would seem to offer one of the easiest chairs in which imbecility has ever reposed. Owing to some of the cabals common in this mimic state, Booth was divided from his venerable preceptor Betterton; but when the chief actors of Drury-Lane theatre, exhausted by the tyranny of Rich, sought an asylum elsewhere, Booth continued firm to Rich, till a last stroke of severity put an end to the dominion he had so long abused. Accident, however, sometimes does more for individuals than the force of merit or prudence of design. The stage is so peculiarly exposed to this glorious uncertainty, that many actors have greatness thrust upon them, not only without the slightest desert, but even the remotest expectation. Such was the fate of Booth, who found himself suddenly exalted to a height which, it is true, he had long been qualified to attain, yet, by causes over which no visible agency could exercise its control, he had never reached.

In the year 1712, Mr. Addison produced his *Cato*—an artificial, cold, declamatory work, exhibiting some popu-

lar notions of government, and embellished with a few patches of common-place poetry. The public, at this juncture, was rendered combustible by opposite political factions, and *Cato* fired the controversy between them on both sides; it was caught at alike by Whigs and Tories, as exhibiting a test of their constitutional opinions. Booth, as Cato, was luckily the prime bearer of the mighty brand which kindled the combustion, and it lighted him the way to thickened honours and redoubled emoluments. The Tory supporters of *Cato*, with a suitable message, sent him a handsome present for the zeal he had displayed in his performance, and the managers evinced their sense also of his merit by making him a similar donation; while Lord Bolingbroke procured a special order from Queen Anne for his admission into the management, with Wilks, Dogget, and Cibber. It was at this point that Booth attained the apex of his renown, and with this event we close his professional career.

In private life Booth was uxorious and licentious, defects which, however, were almost redeemed by the strictest justice and punctuality in his dealings. In 1704, he married a daughter of Sir William Barkham of Norfolk, who died in 1710, without issue. After her death, he engaged in an amour with Miss Mountford, the daughter of the player of that name, who placed her whole property, amounting to several thousand pounds, in his hands, which, at the dissolution of their intimacy, was most honourably restored, as appears by a deed of release signed by the lady in 1718. The conduct of Booth in the course of this affair and transaction was unworthily traduced; it was said that he had not only injured the lady in her feelings, but also in her fortune, which, as far as the fortune is concerned, was not true;

and he separated from her on the discovery of her intimacy with another gentleman. She had, in fact, great reason to repent of her infidelity to him; for her new lover embezzled her money, and even in other respects treated her ill.

About the time he separated from Miss Mountford he began to fix his eyes on a Miss Hester Saintlow, who was at that time celebrated for her beauty, her money, her jewels, and her incontinency, and he afterwards married her,—an event which greatly distressed Miss Mountford, and threw her into a violent fit of despondency, which some say killed her, if she had not been enamoured of a bottle before. However, it is certain she did not long survive his marriage.

He continued to perform his dramatic duties until the year 1727, when, early in the acting season, he was seized with a fever, which lasted six-and-forty days; and though his health was partially restored, he never enjoyed his profession again to the extent he had previously taken in it; indeed, he was seized with a great reluctance to appear on any stage, excepting in the run of a play called *The Double Falsehood*, brought on by Mr. Theobald in 1729, and unjustly ascribed to Shakspeare. In this drama he was prevailed on to accept a part, but afterwards gave it up. The part was Julio, and after seven nights performance he finally withdrew from the stage. He then fell into indifferent health, and his mind sank under a complication of diseases. Four years of fatal incurable madness followed, with, however, occasional lucid intervals; on the 9th or 10th of May 1733, he paid the last debt of nature, in the fifty-third year of his age, leaving behind him only a disconsolate widow, who immediately quitted the stage,

and who survived him till the 15th of January 1773. To her he left the whole of his fortune, which he candidly acknowledged not to be more than two-thirds of what he had received from her on the day of their marriage.

He is described as having been a well-made man, but of short stature, and yet possessed of an air of great dignity, which is the more remarkable, as, by the description of his physiognomy, it is not easy to conceive that his features could have borne any great expression of majesty. His face was round and red, and his muscles were so large that the emotions of them were perceptible even to the galleries. The passions of rage and grief were those in which he chiefly excelled. Othello and Jaffier were esteemed his two greatest parts; but in Cato and Brutus it was thought he attained a serene sublimity of deportment that could not be surpassed. In comedy his powers were inferior, still in a few characters he was allowed to have exceeded mediocrity. But he was not always uniform, and sometimes forgot himself, especially in personal pride and vanity. After the public courtesy paid to him in *Cato*, he so far neglected his own merit, that, on one occasion, a message was sent to him from the boxes, when he was performing Othello, to inquire whether he was playing to please himself or the audience. When he was afflicted with his lunacy he often imagined himself a king or a tyrant, and outheroded Herod to his servants.—In this state the managers stopped his salary of ten guineas a week; upon which an action was brought against them in Chancery, without success.

As an actor we are, however, bound by the testimony of his contemporaries, to regard him as of a high class; but I have searched in vain to discover in what his pre-

eminence consisted, and have been led to conclude that he was greatly inferior to Betterton, and chiefly distinguished for his declamation. He was an author of some things which his professional popularity gave a name to. His character as a writer was not, however, established by any work of importance either in point of bulk or merit: *The Death of Dido*, a masque, is his only dramatic production. Altogether, he seems justly entitled to the epithet of an accomplished man, and appears, after his wild oats were sown, to have been a gentleman in his profession. His character was adorned with many graces, among which a perfect goodness of heart—the basis of every virtue—was conspicuous. He was gay and lively, yet said to have been diffident of his abilities, and to have been much sought for on account of his other eminent qualities. Although he kept no horses of his own, not one nobleman had more at his command; and he lived throughout the greater part of his grown-up life on a footing of good equality with the great. To his profession he was considered a distinguished ornament; to mankind a respectable brother; and his general conduct partook more of those errors which injured himself than did wrong to any other.

## GEORGE FARQUHAR.

George Farquhar, whose celebrity as a dramatic author has long eclipsed his fame as a player, was the son of a clergyman of Armagh, and was born at Londonderry in 1678, where he received the rudiments of his education, and was thence sent to Trinity College, Dublin, to complete it. The course and modes of study at that university being calculated to make profound rather than polite scholars, did not conciliate the genius of Farquhar, and accordingly he acquired no distinction; on the contrary, he was regarded by his companions as among the dullest of their fellow-students, and it is said that he was expelled the college, less, however, on account of his incapacity, than an injudicious attempt to turn a solemn and sacred topic into ridicule.

He then engaged himself to Mr. Ashbury, the manager of the theatre, and made his appearance on the stage in the character of Othello, in 1695; but he only continued there part of the season, for his histrionic talent was not eminent, and he failed to obtain the approbation of the public. In some respects, however, he possessed several endowments which perhaps justified him in attempting the profession of a player; for although his voice was thin, and his diffidence excessive, he possessed an excellent memory, a correct manner of speaking, an elegant deportment, and a person sufficiently favourable.

At this period he has been described as an amiable young man, much esteemed by his friends, and indulgently considered by the audience; but an accident, rather than want of success, induced him to retire from the stage. In a scenic combat he happened to take a real sword instead of a foil, and in the encounter wounded his antagonist, although not mortally, in so dangerous a manner, that his recovery was long doubtful. This affair, entirely an accident, affected him very deeply; he suffered from it painful remorse, indeed, to such a degree, that, as I have said, he quitted the stage, although he was then but seventeen years of age.

In the life of Wilks I have already mentioned that it was upon his suggestion Farquhar came to London, where his ripening talents soon attracted notice, and procured him the patronage of the Earl of Orrery, from whom he received a Lieutenant's commission. It was not, however, as an officer that he was destined to establish his fame, even although in that capacity he was distinguished by the purity of his general conduct, and his professional bravery on several occasions. Wilks, who knew him well, and was persuaded that he possessed great dramatic talent, never ceased to stimulate him to undertake the composition of a comedy, and at last prevailed on him to attempt one. His first was *Love and a Bottle*, which, though written before he had attained his twentieth year, yet displays such a variety of incident and character, with such a sprightly dialogue, and so much knowledge of the world, that it cannot be read without admiration as a wonderful effort for one so young. Wilks's discovery of the bias of Farquhar's genius reflects honour on his sagacity; for the reception which the comedy met with, on account of its own merit, ratified the soundness of his discernment.

In 1700, Farquhar brought out his celebrated comedy of *The Constant Couple, or a Trip to the Jubilee,* in which the performance of Wilks, in the character of Sir Harry Wildair, was esteemed one of the best-conceived and most admirably executed parts ever exhibited in the whole range of the English drama. It has now been many years laid on the shelf, from the inability of any actor to take it up, and for no other reason,—for it is, indeed, imagined and drawn in the finest spirit of comedy; but to perform it, in any degree adequate to the idea of the author requires peculiar endowments, both in person and manners, and a natural gallantry of deportment rarely seen even in gentlemen of the best birth and fortune. It is not, however, my intention to criticise the respective merits of his several pieces; they all exhibited great dramatic power, but were not each received with equal popularity. *Sir Harry Wildair,* or the second part of *The Constant Couple,* should be regarded as having been written in compliance with some wish expressed by the author's friends, in consequence of the triumphant success which had attended the original performance of that exquisite character, for it would appear that the author's taste was averse to the task of repeating it; at least, this much is certain, that it is considered as the most indifferent of his works, though the impetus given by the former production disposed the public to receive it with applause.

*The Inconstant,* which followed, shows unquestionably greater talent, but did not succeed. A change which at that time took place in the public taste, by which the legitimate drama was deserted, and more alien entertainments preferred, has been alleged as the cause of its cold reception; but the inherent deficiency of not possessing

any single predominant part affords, in my opinion, a more satisfactory explanation. Of *The Twin Rivals*, in 1703, and *The Stage Coach*, in 1705, I can offer no opinion, having never read either, nor are they regarded as at all so eminent as the two pieces by which they were followed. *The Recruiting Officer*, first exhibited in 1705, is still one of the stock pieces of the stage, and possesses, both in the several parts, and in the respective dialogue of those parts, the most appropriate comic excellence. It has been said that Farquhar, in this particular drama, revelled in pleasantry, so amusingly has he rallied the follies, foibles, and vices, the subjects of his satire,—and that, had he not been an Irishman and an officer, the liberty he has taken with the characteristics of the army would probably have been resented. Of *The Beaux Stratagem*, his last composition, I have already, in the biography of Wilks, given an account of the origin; and all my readers have probably enjoyed the vivid and gay spirit which, under the most depressing circumstances composed, sparkles and plays throughout that vigorous though eccentric production.

Tradition has preserved an opinion, that Farquhar has, in his young, gay, and gallant characters, sketched himself; and it is not improbable he did so, for the same chronicler reports that he was wild, witty, and humoursome, blest with talent, and adorned with the highest feelings of honour and courage. Besides contributing so many excellent dramatic compositions to the stage, he has the merit of adding Mrs. Oldfield to its ornaments. In the life of that distinguished actress I have already mentioned the incident by which she became known to him, and the motive which has been alleged as one of the causes, besides her ability, which

induced him to urge her to a profession for which she was endowed with high qualifications and a predilection so strong as to make them genius.

But whatever the admiration may have been which attached him to this lady, it does not appear to have interfered with his ordinary pursuits, for in 1703 he was married to another, and, as he was led to believe, one possessed of considerable fortune. In this, however, he was deceived; but his conduct after making the mortifying discovery was becoming the gentlemanly generosity of his character. Perhaps, however, as the deception on the part of the lady can merit no lighter epithet than a deliberate fraud, the world will ever think that he assented more than he ought to have done to the injury of which he was the victim, by continuing to treat such a delinquent with kindness. Had he married her entirely from mercenary motives, his treatment of her would have been no more than just; but when it is considered that he was deliberately inveigled into her snares, it must be allowed that his conduct exceeded what was to be expected from common humanity.

The lady had no fortune whatever, but had fallen in love with the man, and knowing that he was volatile, thought he was not likely to be drawn into matrimony without the bait of some considerable advantage; she accordingly contrived to make the public suppose her possessed of a large fortune, and to find means of letting Farquhar hear of her regard. Vanity was thus brought into co-operation with interest, and they were in consequence married. But whatever judgment the public pronounces on her, his conduct after the discovery was such as could only have been expected from the romance of a player's nature, and the high tone of his own sentiments. He

never once upbraided her for the imposition, but regarding it as a trick dictated by the ingenuity of love, treated her with all the tenderness of the most delicate husband.

Mrs. Farquhar did not, however, long enjoy the happiness which she had purchased at such a sacrifice of honour, for the consequences of this imprudent union may be easily traced as the means which tended to abridge his life. Involved in debt by the expenses of an increasing family, he solicited the patronage of the Duke of Ormond, who advised him to sell the commission he had received from the Earl of Orrery, and promised him a captaincy of dragoons. The expedient which this suggestion offered he unfortunately adopted, and with the proceeds paid his debts; but the Duke neglected his promise. The disappointment preyed upon the mind of poor Farquhar, and hastened his end. The friendship of Wilks was in this crisis exerted for his advantage, and by his cheering he was induced to undertake the composition of *The Beaux Stratagem;* but Death stood in derision at his elbow, and only spared him till he had finished his task. He died in April 1707, before he had completed half the run of his natural course, being then scarcely thirty years of age.

During the rehearsal of *The Beaux Stratagem*, written under such circumstances, though his fatal hour was felt to be coming, his felicitous gaiety was never dimmed. He even sported with his suffering. For one day, when Wilks, who often then visited him, said that Mrs. Oldfield thought he had dealt in the piece too freely with the character of Mrs. Sullen, in giving her to Archer without a proper divorce, he replied, with his wonted playfulness,

"I will, if she pleases, solve that immediately by getting a real divorce, marrying her myself, and giving her

my bond that she shall be a real widow in less than a fortnight."

But with all that seeming disregard of his peril and inevitable doom, the anguished feeling of the anxious parent was bleeding in his heart. Among his papers, after his death, Wilks found the following touching note addressed to himself:—

"DEAR BOB,

"I have not any thing to leave thee to perpetuate my memory but two helpless girls; look upon them sometimes, and think of him that was, to the last moment of his life, thine,

GEORGE FARQUHAR."

This appeal to Wilks was not in vain, and was regarded with the tenderness and generosity of his character; he kindly showed to the orphans all proper attention, and when they became fit to be put out into the world, he procured a benefit for them from the theatre. Nevertheless, the fate of Farquhar's family was melancholy. His wife died in the utmost indigence, one of the daughters married a low tradesman, and the other was living in 1764 in great poverty, but happily her mind found her situation almost congenial, for she had no pleasure or pride in the celebrity of her father, and was in every respect fitted to her humble condition.

The following character of Farquhar, written by himself, addressed to a lady, though imbued with the lively spirit that scintillates in his comedies, has something in it that I have often thought, in connexion with his fate, extremely pathetic.

"My outside," says he, "is neither better nor worse than my Creator made it; and the piece being drawn by

so great an artist, it were presumption to say there were many strokes amiss. I have a body qualified to answer all the ends of its creation, and that is sufficient.

"As to the mind, which in most men wears as many changes as their body, so in me it is generally dressed like my person, in black. Melancholy is its every-day apparel, and it has hitherto found few holidays to make it change its clothes. In short, my constitution is very splenetic and yet very amorous; both which I endeavour to hide, lest the former should offend others, and the latter incommode myself. And my reason is so vigilant in restraining these two failings, that I am taken for an easy-natured man with my own sex, and an ill-natured clown by yours.

"I have very little estate but what lies under the circumference of my hat; and should I by mischance come to lose my head, I should not be worth a groat; but I ought to thank Providence that I can by three hours' study live one-and-twenty with satisfaction to myself, and contribute to the maintenance of more families than some who have thousands a-year.

"I have something in my outward behaviour which gives strangers a worse opinion of me than I deserve; but I am more than recompensed by the opinion of my acquaintance, which is as much above my desert.

"I have many acquaintance, very few intimates, but no friend,—I mean in the old romantic way; I have no secret so weighty but what I can bear in my own breast; nor any duels to fight but what I may engage in without a second; nor can I love after the old romantic discipline. I would have my passion, if not led, yet at least waited on by my reason; and the greatest proof of my affection that a lady must expect is this,—I would run

any hazard to make us both happy, but would not for any transitory pleasure make either of us miserable.

"If ever, Madam, you come to know the life of this piece, as well as he that drew it, you will conclude that I need not subscribe the name to the picture."

To this vivid sketch, it only remains for me to say a few words respecting his genius.

As a player, his merits were obviously of an ordinary stamp, for although he left the stage in early life, he does not appear to have felt within himself the consciousness that he was able to excel. He was one of those men of genius, who deserve the epithet of bright, rather than splendid. In the choice of his subjects, the sprightliness of his dialogue, and the life of his characters, his contemporaries appeared, by their reception of his works, to have thought him highly estimable, but posterity objects to the licentiousness of some of his scenes, a fault he inherited from the taste of his age; still the reader that considers his youth, talents, and misfortunes, will sigh over the memory of one who has extended the scope of jocund pleasures.

# JAMES QUIN.

It deserves to be particularly remarked, that although few men live more in conversation than Quin, there is no good life of him extant. The only one deserving of the name of a biographical picture, is the anonymous publication of 1766, and that is in so many respects defective, that it is totally unworthy of its professed object. It has been said that it was written by Goldsmith; but it is unlike any work by him both in style and general talent. This fact will serve to excuse some of the faults of the present undertaking; the writer has really felt himself obliged to compile a new work from very heterogeneous materials.

It is commonly supposed that this great actor and able wit was a native of Ireland, but my inquiries have ascertained that he was born in King-Street, Covent-Garden, London, on the 24th of February 1693, and that his ancestors were of an ancient English family. Some time before his birth, his father had been settled in Dublin. His grandfather, Mark Quin, was Lord Mayor of that city in 1676.

The father of our hero received a gentlemanly education in Trinity College, Dublin; thence he came over to Lincoln's-inn, and was called to the bar. At the death of the Alderman he returned with his infant son to Ireland, to take possession of his fortune, which in those days was deemed highly respectable.

Quin, in due time, was educated under the care of Dr. Jones, of Dublin, a teacher celebrated for his learning; and he continued with him until the death of his father, in 1710, at which time he was not able to prove his legitimacy, nor is any account of his mother now to be met with.

While his father lived, Quin was destined for the bar, and about the age of twenty he came over to London to study jurisprudence more perfectly than at that time he was expected to be able to do in Dublin. For this purpose he took chambers in the Temple, and studied Coke upon Littleton, with the usual success of young men who little regarded either; in fact, he ran into a life of gaiety, and Shakspeare was preferred to the Statutes at large.

When his father died, he found that means were wanting for his support, and that circumstance induced him to think of those talents which he had received from Nature. His good sense told him that he had made no comparative progress in the law, and that the stage was his only alternative. He saw, indeed, that merit was not enough to ensure success to a young counsellor, and that without the patronage of friends, talent is at the outset but a sorry help. Quin had only talent; and he became, in the true sense of the term, a mere adventurer.

He had many of the requisites to form a good actor—an expressive countenance, an inquisitive eye, a clear voice, full and melodious—an extensive memory, a majestic figure, and, above all, an enthusiastic admiration of Shakspeare. He had moreover associated with the principal actors of the time, and it was to Ryan that he first communicated his intention of coming upon the

stage, by whom, it is said, he was first introduced to the managers of Drury-Lane, who engaged him, in August 1717, to appear in the course of the following winter.

Nothing can be opposed to this statement, nor am I enabled to contradict the apocryphal report of his having first appeared on the stage in Old Smock Alley Theatre, Dublin, as Abel in *The Committee*, and that he was advised to leave that house and come to London.

It has been observed, that there is some sort of seeming hardship imposed on a young actor, on his first entrance into an established company, by the parts being all previously engaged, and that preferment must in consequence be waited for, and be slow. The observation is only in part true as applied to Quin, although when he made his first appearance, and up till the period when Garrick showed the absurdity of the rule, it was an etiquette in the profession, that seniority should be considered with as much jealousy in the Green-Room, as in the War-office, or the Admiralty. A performer would have been looked upon by his competitors as little better than an usurper, who ventured to violate this decorum.

While Quin was employed in studying those parts in which he imagined he might appear in the ensuing season, he was unexpectedly obliged to leave London. In his youthful years he laid no claim to any peculiar purity in his conduct, and formed, what he supposed, a very snug alliance with a woollen-draper's wife. One night he met the lady by accident, and persuaded her to accompany him to a tavern, and she could not resist his persuasion. But a stupid waiter showed negligently into the same room a vestal, in company with the husband of the lady. Swords were drawn—the ladies screamed and a battle ensued. A crim. con. and an assault and bat-

tery, were both instituted, and our hero fled to Dublin. The husband, however, died soon after, and Quin was invited to return. It was during this evasion, that I am of opinion he made his appearance as Abel, in Smock-Alley.

After his return to the English stage, Quin, according to the custom of that period, remained some time in the condition of a faggot, as the novice performers were at that time called, till an order came from the Lord Chamberlain to revive the tragedy of *Tamerlane*. It was got up with great magnificence. It happened, however, that on the third night, the actor who performed Bajazet was taken ill, and Quin was persuaded to read the part. In this he succeeded so well, that the audience gave him the greatest applause. The next night he had made himself perfect in the part, and performed with redoubled approbation;—but the theatrical world is a miniature of the real; actors of twice his age thought his progress too rapid.

It was not, however, till the year 1720, that he had any opportunity of displaying his great theatrical endowments. In that season *The Merry Wives of Windsor* was revived, and there was no one of the whole company who would undertake the part of Falstaff. Rich, the manager, was therefore inclined to give up the representation after it had been prepared, when Quin happening to come in his way, offered to attempt it.

"Hem!" said Rich, taking a pinch of snuff, "you attempt Falstaff—why you might as well think of acting Cato after Booth! The character of Falstaff, young man, is quite another character from what you think, (and taking another pinch of snuff,) it is not a little snivelling part that—that—in short any one can do. There is not

a man among you that has any idea of the part but myself. It is quite out of your walk. No, never think of Falstaff—it is quite out of your walk, indeed, young man."

Quin, however, took the part, and in his possession it became one of the ornaments of the English stage. Rich, however, had only spoken like the rest of the world. It is a vulgar error to suppose that artists are the best judges of the professional merits of each other. They may be, and commonly are, the best judges of the manipulation of their profession; but there is no reason in experience that they should go farther. The opinion of an audience should, in cases similar to this, be always preferred to that of an individual. Artists can be in their profession no better judges, than they are themselves excellent; but an audience, which is miscellaneous, will probably be always better, because each of those composing it has a higher unknown standard than his own experience.

The next year, 1721, of Quin's performance, is remarkable in dramatic history, as the first in which soldiers appeared as guards in the theatre: an useless pageant, and an event which may be ascribed to the occasional want of common sense, for which the English Government has been of old distinguished. Before that season, the theatres had only been guarded by civil constables. A riot arising in that of Lincoln's Inn Fields, gave an occasion for the military power to be added to the civil, for the protection of the audience and the players from insult. The occasion was this:

A certain noble Earl, whether Scotch or Irish the record does not say, much addicted to the wholesome and inspiring beverage of whiskey, was behind the scenes, and seeing one of his friends on the other side

among the performers, crossed the stage; of course, was hissed by the audience. Rich, who was on the side that the noble Earl came to, was so provoked, that he told his Lordship "not to be surprised if he was not allowed again to enter." The drunken Peer struck Mr. Rich a slap on the cheek, which was immediately returned, and his Lordship's face being round, and fat, and sleek, resounded with the smack of the blow; a battle royal ensued, the players on the one side, and that part of the aristocracy then behind the scenes on the other. In the end, the players being strongest, either in number or valour, thrashed the gentlemen, and turned them all out into the street, where they drew their swords, stormed the boxes, broke the sconces, cut the hangings, and made a wonderful riot, just as foolish sprigs of quality presume even yet to do. Quin came round with a constable and watchmen from the stage, charged the rioters, and they were all taken into custody, and carried in a body before Justice Hungerford, who then lived in the neighbourhood, and were bound by him over to answer the consequences—they were soon, however, persuaded by their wiser friends to make up the matter, and the manager got ample redress. The King, on hearing of the affair, was indignant, and ordered a guard to attend the theatres, and there it nightly stands ever since, a warning monument of a Lord drinking too much whiskey.

We must not suppose that the appearance of the military at the theatre was a voluntary act of the sovereign, although it was, in political parlance, ascribed to him; in point of fact, it was not only the opinion of the managers, but of others, that the military at the playhouses would give an air of consequence to the perform-

ance, and suppress all future disturbances—they forgot to ascertain how far the soldiers had the power to act. A great controversy, in consequence of this innovation, arose among the people, and John Bull evinced his wonted sagacity. Some thought it would have the effect of dragooning the town into the approbation of a new piece, or a new actor; and others, that the slightest indication on the part of the managers to direct the soldiers to act, would be worse for themselves than the tearing up of all the benches in the pit and gallery; and in reality it has so happened; the military are like those idols dumb which blinded nations stand in awe of. They have weapons in their hands, but they dare not use them; and of this at the time the theatres were duly apprised by the Government. Still they persevere in maintaining this foolish pageantry, so much at variance with the genius of the people, even though, from the beginning, the soldiers at the playhouses have in all rows and riots been objects of derision and contempt.

The first battle was much like the last. It was on the production of a new pantomime. In it a Madame Chateauneuf, a dancer, was to perform, but being taken ill the piece was suspended. The audience endured the disappointment in silent patience; the second night they only hissed, but on the third the storm arose. They handed out the ladies, and then began to demolish the interior of the house. A noble Marquis opened the war by proposing, as the shortest way of making all things clear, to set it on fire, but his Lordship was overruled, so they, in their tender mercy, only broke the harpsichord and bass-viols of the orchestra, the looking-glasses, sconces and chandeliers; pulled up the benches in the pit; broke down the boxes and the royal arms, and some such

trifling mischief as nearly ruined the whole concern. The noble peer who so distinguished himself by proposing to burn the theatre, relented, however, the next day, and sent the managers a hundred pound note for his share in the amusement. On this occasion the soldiers stood at their posts magnificently idle.

The next theatrical fight was more national and patriotic. The proprietors of the little theatre in the Haymarket, having imagined that French comedies would amuse the town, brought over a party of Parisians, and most atrociously introduced them on the stage. Every true-born Englishman felt the insult, and manfully resolved to avenge it. The curtain drew up, and each actor appeared with his guard, but the audience, not intimidated, were determined to stop the performance, and accordingly began with cat-calls, then a volley of pippins, and thirdly, a direful discharge of eggs. The proprietors lost their senses, more especially when they found the soldiers stood still; and wringing their hands, and quaking with fear, slunk behind the scenes, where, as a last resource against the whirlwind, they sent for a justice to read the riot-act, but when he came, instead of taking orders from them, he sent both troops and actors tramping off the stage. The warriors and the heroes of the buskin being thus disposed of, John Bull thought it then high time to give the proprietors a taste of his power in punishment, so he demolished the house. The Ambassadors of France and Spain being present, he would not let them escape till they had witnessed his suavity, and accordingly he cut the traces of their carriages, and obliged them to sit out the performance of his prank.

The contagion spread from the Haymarket to Drury Lane, and furnished Quin with an opportunity of showing the audience his self-possession and address. In the

midst of a riot one night, when the play could not begin till some of the royal family, who had sent notice of their intention to be there, had come, he appeased a crowded and enraged audience by telling them one of his happiest stories.

Quin, indeed, never on any occasion lost his self-command. It is related of him, that there was a riot once at the stage-door, when he wounded slightly in the hand a young fellow who had drawn upon him. The spark presently after came into one of the boxes over the stage-door. The play was *Macbeth*, and in the soliloquy where he sees the dagger, as Quin repeated,

"And on thy blade are drops of reeking blood,"*

the young gentleman bawled out—"Ay, reeking indeed—It is my blood." The actor gave him a severe side-look, and replied, loud enough to be heard, "D——n your blood!" and then went on with the speech.

Not long after this affair a circumstance occurred painful to repeat. Notwithstanding the rough fantastic manner which Quin often delighted to assume, no man was of a more humane disposition, or less addicted to revenge, at the same time he would not tamely, in any way, submit to an insult. It happened that at this period there was a Mr. Williams, a native of Wales, on the stage of Drury Lane, who performed the part of the messenger in the tragedy of *Cato*, and in saying "Cæsar sends health to Cato," Quin was so amused at the manner in which he pronounced the last word—"Keeto," that he replied with his usual coolness, "Would he had sent a better messenger!" a retort which so stung Williams, that he vowed revenge, and followed him when he

* In those days they were less careful in giving the text than now, and the antiquities of the language were less understood; this accounts for the error here.

came off into the green-room, where, after representing the professional injury in making him ridiculous before the audience, he challenged Quin to give him the redress of a gentleman. Quin, with his wonted philosophy and humour, endeavoured to rally him, but it only added fuel to the rage of Williams, who, without farther remonstrance, retired, and waited for him under the piazza, where he drew. In the scuffle Williams was killed. Quin was tried for the murder at the Old Bailey, and a verdict brought in against him of manslaughter, which at the time was applauded as just and most equitable.

In the year 1731, Quin was considered to have attained the meridian of his profession; all the great actors had died or had retired, and he had no competitor. His merit, however, was not allowed to him until he performed Cato. In undertaking the part he showed great good taste; instead of having his name in the bills in the ordinary form, he paid a just compliment to the town and the merits of his predecessor, by having it stated that "the part of Cato would be only attempted by Mr. Quin." The propriety of this invitation was duly appreciated—a full house was the consequence, and the actor did not disappoint it. When he said, speaking of his son, "Thanks to the Gods—my boy has done his duty," the whole house was so affected, that there was a universal shout of "Booth outdone." Yet this was not all, he was encored in the famous soliloquy; and tradition still continues to repeat, that the character of Cato, as represented by this judicious actor, was one of the finest parts ever represented on any stage.

For ten years, Quin continued at the head of his profession, unrivalled—but the empire of the stage was not in all that time equally prosperous and in peace. The tyranny of the managers of Drury Lane, to whom the shares of Booth

and Colley Cibber had been sold, was so great, that the whole company rebelled, and attempted to form an independent state in the Haymarket. After various plots and conspiracies, the war ended, as far as Quin was concerned, in his becoming engaged by Fleetwood, who was the purchaser of the shares. It was on this occasion that Theophilus Cibber, having indulged his fancy farther than truth, some opprobrious words passed between him and Quin, who evinced his contempt for Theophilus in the strongest and foulest expressions that the language could furnish:—enmity on Cibber's part continued, in consequence, to ferment until, as shall be duly reported, they came to a duel. In the mean time, Quin was appointed in Theophilus's place to read the new plays, and one of the stories related of the manner he exercised this vocation deserves to be repeated.

A poor poet had placed a tragedy in his hands one night behind the scenes, whilst he was still dressed for the character he had performed. Quin put the manuscript into his pocket and forgot it. The bard having allowed some time to elapse, sufficient for the reading of the piece, called one morning to know what was its doom. Quin gave some invented reasons for its not being proper for the stage; the author requested it might be given back to him,—"There," said Quin, "it lies in the window." But Bayes, on going to take it up, found a comedy, and his was a most direful tragedy—"Well, then," says the actor, "if that be not it, faith, Sir, I have certainly lost your play."—"Lost my play!" cried the astonished bard—"Yes, by G—d! but I have: look ye, however, here is a drawer full of both comedies and tragedies, take any two you please in the room of it."

This was certainly treating the affair coolly enough,

but the poet in the end was pacified, by having the run of the house, and his next piece was accepted, which, it is said, was no other than a rough copy of the one which had been so scurvily treated.

But although the humour of Quin was on all occasions to assume this gruff and cool manner, it was ever accompanied with some indication of the native warmth and gentleness of his heart, which greatly softened all apparent acerbity, and even often pleased those that his words and style were calculated to offend. This appears nowhere so effective as in his transactions with the celebrated George Anne Bellamy, whose Apology, unfortunately, can scarcely be regarded as entitled to full credit, for she herself acknowledges, that being written from recollection, it was not always correct, and it is now pretty well ascertained that it was not her own production, but dictated to another. His conduct towards Miss Bellamy is almost now the only evidence remaining that he was not always that wit, actor, and eater which he is commonly represented to have been. His paternal kindness towards that lady had in it many amiable traits, and helps in some degree to give us an idea nearer to his worth than either the sayings or doings attributed to him.

She was introduced to him by Rich, the manager of Covent Garden, where he was playing, or rather ruling, with a rod of iron. He then thought her too young for the stage, and on that account cherished a distaste of her; but when she came out and displayed the powers she possessed, he generously suppressed his prejudices, and continued through life to treat her with more than common friendship. One day, while she was yet but only attracting the public attention, he desired to speak with

her after the rehearsal, and on her entering his dressing-room, he took her by the hand, and said with that benignity which few could assume better — "My dear girl, you are vastly followed, I hear. Do not let the love of finery, or any other inducement, prevail upon you to commit an indiscretion. Men in general are rascals— you are young and engaging, and therefore ought to be doubly cautious. If you want any thing in my power that money can purchase, come to me and say, James Quin, give me such a thing, and my purse shall be always at your service"—And his eyes glistened with the fond tear with which this fatherly admonition was delivered.

In addition to his partiality for this young lady, who in the days of her gaiety and innocence was one of the most fascinating creatures of the period, Quin always was respected by keeping the best company, and conducting himself in a gentlemanly manner. He not only often associated with men of high rank but of great talents, and was less regarded as a distinguished player than as a man of the most companionable qualities. He numbered among the friends of his old age some of the highest names in the catalogue of the literary stars of the time, and was always eminent for the excellence with which he entertained them.

His affection to Thomson the poet has often been mentioned, but the manner in which he evinced it, both during the poet's life and after his death, will ever be noticed with commendation. He delivered the prologue to Thomson's *Coriolanus*, written by Lord Lyttelton, and it has always been commemorated as one of the tenderest exhibitions that ever the stage displayed.—It was on the performance of this tragedy that he, owing to his pronunciation being of the old school, amused some of the

audience by an inadvertent mistake. In the scene where the Roman ladies come in procession to solicit Coriolanus to return to Rome, they are attended by the tribunes. The centurions of the Volscian army bearing *fasces*, their ensigns of authority, they are ordered by the hero to lower them, as a token of respect. But the men who performed the centurions, imagining, through Quin's mode of pronunciation, that he said *faces*, all bowed their heads—fortunately this ludicrous affair was in the rehearsal, and not before an audience.

We now advance to that period when the whole style of acting was to undergo a change, and when the merits of Quin were destined to suffer an eclipse.

He was at the head of the Drury Lane company, when Garrick made his appearance in the character of Richard the Third, at Goodman's Fields. But he was the only actor that could be opposed to him in any particular character. It was soon, however, manifest that Garrick's universality would not allow of any rival; at the same time, although his general superiority was at once conceded, it was still maintained that Quin, in the parts of Sir John Brute, Sir John Falstaff, and in Cato, was still above all praise, and even in the opinion of many, he was still the superior of Garrick in every tragic character;*

* Bernard, in his Retrospections of the Stage, confirms this opinion by that of the late Earl of Conyngham, a nobleman who was in his time considered one of the best representatives of the true old British Peer. Quin was with his Lordship always spoken of as the great actor, and continually pitched by him against Garrick, especially in these characters, and he felicitously described their respective merits. In Cassius and Brutus in the quarrel-scene, he used to say that Quin resembled "a solid three-decker, lying quiet, and scorning to fire, but with evident power, if put forth, of sending its antagonist to the bottom;—Garrick, a frigate running round it, attempting to grapple, and every moment threatening an explosion that would destroy both."

but this was a factious opinion, for save in the three parts enumerated, in every other Garrick was the greatest performer. Quin himself saw that in striking out a more natural style, and with greater natural endowments, Garrick was destined to attain an eminence in the profession which had not before been reached. But still he for a long time adhered to his own peculiar old style, till the taste of the town could be no longer resisted. The history of the stage, however, from this period, will more properly come into the life of Garrick, respecting which many more materials have been carefully preserved than of Quin's; I shall, therefore, reserve the consideration of their joint performances until I have cause to treat more at large of Garrick's biography: in the mean time, it was admitted universally that Quin retired too soon from the stage, and there is good reason to believe that had Rich treated him with more discretion, the world would not so early have had cause to lament his loss.

Although Quin was a kind-hearted, jovial, and facetious man, I know not how it is, if it be not from the coarseness of some of his jokes, that a general impression prevails of his being a morose character. No general persuasion was ever more fallacious. He was naturally a handsome man, beloved by his friends, and always on joyous terms with himself. Few understood the inclinations of man better, and none could be more indulgent to unpremeditated error. While he cherished a little affectation in himself, to conceal the warmth and mildness of his dispositions, he discerned every degree of it in others with a shrewd eye. I think he was an accomplished specimen of a man of the world, of the right sort, for he was more amiable than he really seemed to be. Among other objects of interest to him was Macklin, the con-

temporary of so many ages of players; but the intractable nature of that choleric and vacillating person, as will appear in his life, often interrupted their friendship. Still, such was the superiority of Quin's demeanour, that Macklin never spoke of him but with respect, even while their intercourse was suspended. During their quarrel, whenever they met there was a studied deportment on both sides, which seemed to indicate that only the necessity of business could ever bring them together. But after this non-intercourse had existed several years, an accident put an end to their formality, and the occasion had so much peculiarity that it merits a circumstantial recital.

They attended the funeral of a brother performer, and after the interment, retired with several others to a tavern in Covent Garden. Neither of them was afraid of his bottle, and they both stayed so late, that about six o'clock in the morning they found themselves alone together. Both felt oddly at the circumstance. Quin, however, was the first to break the ice. He drank Macklin's health, who returned it, and then there was another pause. In the mean time Quin fell into a reverie for some time, when, suddenly recovering, he said to his companion—"There has been a foolish quarrel between you and me, which, though accommodated, I must confess I have not been able entirely to forget till now. The melancholy occasion of our meeting, and the accident of being left together, have made me, thank God, see my error. If you can therefore forget it too, give me your hand, and let us live together in future as brother performers." Macklin instantly held out his hand, and assured him of his friendship—a fresh bottle was called for; to this succeeded another—till Quin

could neither speak nor move—chairs were called to take them home, but none could be found, when Macklin, who had still the use of his legs, desired two of the waiters to put Quin on his back, and triumphantly carried him to his lodgings.

This affair, however, could not repress the ever-ready sarcasms of Quin. When Macklin first performed his great part of Shylock, he was so struck with the ability he displayed in it, that he could not help exclaiming, "If God Almighty writes a legible hand, that man must be a villain!"—And when Macklin, without due consideration, performed the character of Pandulph in *King John*, Quin, on being asked what he thought of it, said, "He was a Cardinal who had been originally a parish-clerk." But his best joke on Macklin was in reply to some one, who remarked that he might make a good actor, having such strong lines in his face; "Lines, Sir," cried Quin, "I see nothing in the fellow's face but a d—ned deal of cordage!" In fact, if we may venture to judge by the freedom with which Quin occasionally treated him, considering that actor's true character, Macklin, with all his eccentricities, must have been a favourite with him.

When Macklin was bringing out his tragedy of *Henry VII. or the Popish Impostor*, Quin told him it would not succeed, and the event fulfilled the prediction. "Well," said Quin, "what do you think of my judgment now?"—"Why, I think posterity will do me justice," was the answer.—"I believe they will," retorted Quin, "for your play now is only damned, but posterity will have the satisfaction to know that both play and author met with the same fate."

Quin had many amusing extravagances of humour, and, among others, of making an annual excursion. In

these he selected some agreeable lady, and agreed with her to accompany him on his tour as long as one hundred pounds would carry them. Quin gave the lady his name for the journey, and when the money was nearly spent they returned to London, and had a parting supper at the Piazzas Covent Garden, where he paid her the balance, and dismissed the accommodating gentlewoman in nearly the following words; "Madam, for our mutual convenience I have given you the name of Quin for this some time past. There is no reason for carrying on this farce here; and now, Madam, give me leave to un-Quin you, and restore to you your own name for the future." Thus the ceremony ended, and the damsel went away.

Since I have broached the jokes and jests of Quin, I may as well go on with a few more. One day, at an auction of pictures, some one pointed out to him old General Guise, adding, "How very ill he looks!"—"Guise, Sir!" said Quin, "you 're mistaken; he is dead these two years."—"Nay," said the other, "believe your eyes,—there he is." Quin put on his spectacles, examined him from head to foot for some time, and then exclaimed, "Why, yes, Sir, I 'm right enough; he has been dead these two years, it is very evident, and has now only gotten a day-rule to see the pictures."

Perhaps, as a wit and an epicure, Quin is now more renowned than as an actor, for those who did remember him are all nearly extinct; and it is chiefly of his humour, and talent in appreciating the excellence of cookery, that he is now the subject of conversation. But even his merit in these will fade, for much of it, in respect to his wit, consisted in his manner; even in his living there was a practical jocularity that added to the zest of his enjoyment; and he assumed a peculiar humour

in both that greatly increased the effect of what he said, and augmented his own relish of what he took. It was chiefly, however, as a practical joker that he excelled; and it must be confessed that there is often much coarseness, though combined with a curious shrewdness, in his sayings.

Previous to Macklin's time, it had been customary to represent Shylock as a low, mean personage, an elegant illustration of the ordinary player's conception of the part, but he conferred on it the true tragic energy of the poet, which it has ever since maintained; and Pope, it is said, cried of it, aloud in the pit,

> "This is the Jew
> That Shakspeare drew."

Quin, when he read it in the journals, curled his lip and echoed,

> "Spew, reader, spew."

Quin was considered by the public as a kind of wholesale dealer in rough fun, and as much attention was paid to his wit sometimes as it probably deserved. Dining one day at a party in Bath, he uttered something which caused a general murmur of delight; a nobleman present, who was not illustrious for the brilliancy of his ideas, exclaimed, "What a pity it is, Quin, my boy, that a clever fellow like you should be a player!" Quin flashed his eye and replied, "What would your Lordship have me to be,—a Lord?"

Some of his sayings had, however, though not often, a playfulness and poetical beauty that merited no common praise. Being asked by a lady why there were more women in the world than men, "It is," said he, "in conformity with the arrangements of Nature, Madam; we always see more of heaven than of earth."

On another occasion, a lady one day, in speaking of transmigration, inquired of him "What creature's form would you hereafter prefer to inhabit?" The lady had a very beautiful neck, Quin looked at it, and said, "A fly's, Madam, that I might have the pleasure of sometimes resting on your ladyship's neck."

He sometimes made occasional visits to Plymouth to eat John Dories, and for some time he lived at hack and manger; on these occasions he resided at one of the inns which happened to be much infested with rats. "My drains," said the landlord, "run down to the quay, and the scents of the kitchen attract the rats."—"That 's a pity," said Quin; "at some leisure moment, before I return to town, remind me of the circumstance, and perhaps I may be able to suggest a remedy." In the mean time he lived expensively, and at the end of eight weeks he called for his bill. "What!" said he, "one hundred and fifty pounds for eight weeks, in one of the cheapest towns in England!" However, he paid the bill, and stepped into his chaise. "Oh, Mr. Quin," said the landlord, "I hope you have not forgot the remedy you promised me for the rats."—"There 's your bill," replied the wit, "show them that when they come, and if they trouble your house again, I 'll be d——d!"

Quin's wit was sometimes distinguished for the drollery of the terms in which his remarks were couched. The original George Barnwell was David Ross, of Covent Garden theatre. In his latter days he grew very portly, and his face became so overloaded with fat as to defeat its expression. On the last occasion in which he appeared in that part, Quin was behind the scenes, and meeting Ross, said, "George Barnwell, David,—George

Barnwell, an apprentice!—you look more like the Lord Mayor of London!"

Quin having had an invitation from a certain nobleman, who was reputed to keep a very elegant table, to dine with him, he accordingly waited upon his Lordship, but found the regale far from answering his expectation. Upon his taking leave, the servants, who were very numerous, had ranged themselves in the hall; Quin, finding that if he gave to each of them it would amount to a pretty large sum, asked, "Which was the cook?" who readily answered, "Me, Sir." He then inquired for the butler, who was as quick in replying as the other; when he said to the first, "Here 's half-a-crown for my eating," and to the other, "Here 's five shillings for my wine; but, by God, gentlemen, I never made so bad a dinner for the money in my life."

The first time Quin was invited to dine upon a turtle,—he must have been then a young man,—he was asked whether he preferred the *callipash* to the *callipee;* and upon his acknowledging his ignorance, the donor of the treat, a West Indian, burst into a loud laugh, saying, "He thought so great an epicure as Mr. Quin could not be unacquainted with the exquisite niceties of so elegant a dish."—"It may be an elegant dish," said Quin, "but, if it had been fit for Christians, we should have been acquainted with it as soon as the wild Indians."

A certain officer in the army, who was not altogether so courageous as might have been wished for in a person of his station, having one night at Bath received the grossest personal affront, that of being taken by the nose, without any way resenting it, he waited upon Quin the next morning to ask his advice, and know how he should

act. "Why, Sir," said he, "soap your nose for the future, and then, by God, they 'll slip their hold."

Quin was asked why he did not marry, take a house, and set up an equipage. "I carry a coach, a wife, and a dinner always in my pocket," he replied; "and I can either take the number, obtain a divorce, or turn off my cook whenever I please."

Sometime before he died, he was observing to an intimate acquaintance that he felt the old man coming upon him; but that he had this satisfaction, let him die when he would, he owed nothing to any man, not even to James Quin.

One day he was ironically complimented by a nobleman, who was a placeman, on his happy retreat at Bath. "Look ye, my Lord," says he, "perhaps 'tis a sinecure your Lordship would not accept of; but, I can assure you, I gave up fourteen hundred a-year for it."

Quin was asked once by a gentleman what he thought of Garrick's acting Sir John Brute. "Why, Sir," said Quin, "it is a part I never saw him in; but I have seen him do Master Jackey Brute very often."

During the management of Mr. Fleetwood at Drury Lane, Quin was to make an apology for Mademoiselle Roland's not being able to perform a favourite dance, on account of having sprained her ankle. The audience was so greatly out of temper at her not appearing, that it required even the consequence of so capital an actor to gain their attention. Quin was appointed, and said, "Ladies and Gentlemen, Madam—a—a Roland has put her ankle out, I wish it had been her neck, and be d——d to her!" and then retired with a hem, amidst shouts of laughter and applause.

An author, after reading an extreme bad play to Quin,

asked his opinion of it. He answered that it would not do by any means. "I wish," resumed the author, "you would advise me what is best to do with it."—"That I can," says Quin, "blot out one half and burn the other."

Quin once, in the character of Cato, received a blow in his face by an orange thrown from the upper gallery; such a circumstance would have disconcerted many an actor possessed of less presence of mind, but instead of being disturbed, he wiped his face, and taking it up, observed, "It was not a Seville orange."

Being once applied to by an author of his acquaintance who had written a play, to introduce him, and recommend his piece to the manager, James readily agreed to do him all the service in his power; but observing the shabbiness of his clothes, asked him if he had any other dress to appear in. "Yes," replied the bard, "I have more clothes than I shall ever wear out." Quin asked an explanation; when the poet told him, in the first place, he had another coat at home that was so very ragged he could never wear it out, and that in the next place, he had three good suits at the pawnbroker's that he believed he should never get out to wear. Quin took the hint, and gave him five guineas to equip himself, introduced him to the manager, and his piece was brought on.

Mrs. Clive coming one night into the Green-room, humming an Italian air, "Pray," said she to Quin, "don't you think I take off Signora Something to a hair?" "Damn me, Madam," says Quin, "if I was thinking about you." "Sir John Brute," said she, "I beg pardon for interrupting your private meditations." "Madam," resumed Quin, "if spitting upon you was not taking notice of you, I would do it."

Mrs. Clive had one night mislaid one of her ear-rings,

which were of some value, and in the heat of her passion she taxed the dressing-woman with having got it. The dresser protested her innocence. "Why," continued Mrs. C. "you have not the face to deny it. Why you can't help blushing at disowning it." Quin, who stood by during this controversy, told her very coolly, "She was quite mistaken, it was only the *reflection* of her face."

A young simple student, who attended the spouting clubs more than he did Westminster Hall, having made a slight acquaintance with Mr. Quin, he one night frankly told him his design was to come upon the stage, but that he wished to have the opinion of a competent judge before he actually put his design in execution, and without any more ceremony began to speak the soliloquy in *Hamlet*,

"To be, or not to be,—that is the question,"

Quin could not help interrupting him, "No question at all—not to be, upon my honour."

Quin had not, however, always the wit on his side; once, upon a journey to Somersetshire, having put up for a few days at a farm-house, he turned his horse to grass, and lost him. Upon inquiring after him of a country fellow, and asking if there were any thieves or horse-stealers in his neighbourhood? the fellow answered, "No; we be all honest folk here, but there's one Quin, I think they call him, a strolling-player from London, mayhap he may have stole him."

Having a new wig brought home which he was to wear upon a particular occasion, a friend being by upon his trying it, before he had paid for it, complimented him for his taste, and highly approved the perriwig. "Faith,

Sir," said Quin, "I know not how good it may prove in the long run, but at *present* it has run me over head and ears in debt."

Quin and Ryan were once upon a journey in Wiltshire, when lighting at an inn where they proposed staying all night, they were told by the landlord there was not a room empty in the house except one, but that he could not recommend it to them for a particular reason; they desired, however, to be shown it, and finding it one of the best apartments in the house, they begged to know what was the reason he could not let them lodge there that night. "Why, Gentlemen, to tell you the truth, it is haunted." "Pshaw!" said Quin, "if that's all, bring us a bottle of your best, and get us supper as soon as you can." The landlord acquiesced, when the travellers having made a hearty meal, and drunk their bottle each, began to think it was high time to go to bed. "Ay," said Quin, "but we must dispatch this same ghost first, or perhaps we may have a troublesome guest when we are asleep." So saying, he drew his pistols, charged and placed them upon the table before him, when having called for an additional recruit of wine, "Now," said he, "we are prepared." Twelve o'clock struck and no ghost yet appeared, but presently a rumbling noise was heard in the chimney. The rattling of a chain soon became very distinct, and a figure descended whimsically clad, which made two or three motions, but without offering any violence. Hereupon, Quin took up a pistol that was ready primed, and expostulated to their spiritual visitor, "Look ye, Mr. Ghost, if you do not immediately acknowledge yourself to be of the human species, by G—d I'll make a ghost of you!" The phantom was too sensi-

ble to remonstrate, and falling upon his knees, roared "That he was master of the adjoining house, and had contrived an opening in the chimney, through which he made his way in that tremendous shape, in order to terrify the host's guests, and prevail upon him to quit the house, that he might supplant him." So ingenuous a declaration saved the ghost's life, but not his reputation; for the master of the inn being called up, and discovering his neighbour to be the evil spirit, the latter was never able to show his own mortal face again in the neighbourhood.

It was observed of Beau Nash, the King of Bath, that though he was very curious about other people's pedigrees, he seldom mentioned his own. Quin was one night somewhat severe upon him on this subject, and compared him to Gil Blas, who was ashamed of his father. "Look ye, James," said he, "I seldom mention my father in company, not because I have any reason to be ashamed of *him*, but because he has some reason to be ashamed of *me*."

Quin was one day lamenting that he grew old, when a shallow, impertinent young fellow, asked him what he would give to be as young as he was. "I would even submit," said Quin, "to be almost as foolish."

One evening, as he was drinking a bottle with Mallet the poet, and having given his opinion rather too freely on some of that bard's productions, he was so out of temper, that Quin could not please him in any thing he said for the remainder of the evening. At length, he offered to wager a dozen of claret, that Mallet did not contradict the next thing he said.—"What's that?"—"Why," replied Quin, "that you are the greatest poet in England."

Quin being asked whether he thought there were many men who could produce such an edition of Shakspeare as Johnson's, "Yes," he replied, "many men, many women, and many children."

Quin was one night going upon the stage in the character of Cato, when Mrs. Cibber pulled him back, to tell him he had a hole in his stocking. "Darned stockings I detest," said Quin, "that seems premeditated poverty."

When in his last illness, the faculty were much divided in their opinion concerning his recovery, but his apothecary never had any doubt about it: one day, after he had felt his patient's pulse, Quin asked him what he thought now, "Why, Sir," answered he, "I think you'll do very well if we can but raise a *sweat*." "Then," said Quin, "only send in your *bill*, and I warrant you the thing is done."

Quin thought angling a very barbarous diversion, and on being asked why, gave this reason. "Suppose some superior being should bait a hook with venison and go a Quinning, I should certainly bite, and what a sight I should be dangling in the air."

When he first saw Westminster Bridge, he exclaimed, "Oh, that my mouth were that centre arch, and that the river ran claret!"

It is said, that during his last illness he attributed his disorder to having omitted his annual visit to Plymouth to eat John Dories, saying, "He considered it as salutary to his constitution as herrings were to a Dutchman, and that if he recovered he would eat nothing else all the days of his life." Probably this gave rise to the following lines, which appeared a few days after his death.

ON THE DEATH OF MR. QUIN.

Alas, poor Quin ! thy jests and stories
Are quite extinguished, and what more is,
Where you 're gone there's no John Dories.

It is, however, impossible to go on at this rate. The number of good things both given and taken by this celebrated man would constitute a volume by themselves, and the best cannot well be repeated, while in others, the style in which they were said often greatly increased their effect, and added glitter as well as point. I must, therefore, return from this desultory digression, and resume the regular narrative.

At the end of the season for 1748, Quin having taken some offence at the conduct of Rich, retired in a fit of resentment to Bath, although then under engagements to him. Rich, who knew that Quin would not be brought round by entreaty, thought to gain him back by contempt. And when Quin, who having indulged his spleen began to relent, and in his penitence wrote him in these words—

"I am at Bath.

QUIN."

The answer was as laconic, though not quite so civil—

"Stay there, and be damned.

RICH."

This reply, it has been well said, cost the public one of the greatest ornaments on the stage; for Quin, upon receiving it, took a firm resolution of never engaging again with "so insolent a blockhead." He, nevertheless, came every year to London, to play Sir John Falstaff for his old friend Ryan, till the year 1754, when, having lost two of his front teeth, he was compelled to decline

the pleasure. The epistle which he wrote to Ryan has, however, much of his wonted terseness in it.

"My dear Friend,—There is no person on earth that I would sooner serve than Ryan—but, by G—d, I will whistle Falstaff for no man."

I have already mentioned that Quin associated more openly with the wits of his time than any other on the stage, but there was no one for whom he entertained a more affectionate esteem than for Thomson, the poet of the Seasons. Hearing that Thomson was confined in a spunging-house for a debt of about seventy pounds, he repaired to the place. Thomson was a good deal disconcerted at seeing him, and the more so as Quin told him he had come to sup with him, and that, as he supposed it would have been inconvenient to have had the supper dressed at the place they were in, he had ordered it from an adjacent tavern, and as a prelude half a dozen of claret was introduced. Supper being over, Quin said, "It is time now we should balance accounts—the pleasure I have had in perusing your works, I cannot estimate at less than a hundred pounds, and I insist on now acquitting the debt:" on saying this, he put down a note and took his leave, without waiting for a reply; but Quin had soon the pleasure to see him in affluence, Thomson having obtained the place of Surveyor-general of the Leeward Islands.

Besides being an eminent elocutionist, Quin is celebrated for various accomplishments—among others for his knowledge of English history, and is said to have judiciously corrected many errors in the text of Shakspeare. These merits, besides those he exhibited on the stage, attracted the attention of the Prince of Wales, the father of his late Majesty King George III., who ap-

pointed him to instruct his children in good English. Under his tuition, they acquired a desire to perform the parts they rehearsed, and Prince George, afterwards the King, under the management of Quin, represented with his brothers and sisters several plays at Leicester House. Quin, it is well known, when informed how his Majesty delivered his first speech, exclaimed, "Ay, I taught the boy to speak!" Nor did his Majesty forget his old tutor, for soon after his accession to the throne, he gave orders, without any application having been made to him, that Quin should be paid a genteel pension from the Civil List — a judicious custom, much to be regretted that it has gone out of fashion!

Quin, however, was not much in need of a pension, for upon quitting the stage, as he was never married, he sank half of his fortune with the Duke of Bedford, and with two thousand pounds he received, and his annuity of two hundred pounds, he permanently retired to Bath. But before he went thither, I ought to relate an adventure which happened to him about that time, in the Bedford Coffee-house.

Theophilus Cibber, who owed him a grudge, as has been related in its proper place, came one night strutting into the Coffee-house, and having walked up to the fireplace, said,

"I am come to call that capon-lined rascal to an account for taking liberties with my character."

Somebody present told him he had passed Quin, who was sitting at the other end of the room.

"Ay," says Theophilus, "so I have, sure enough; but I see he is busy, and I won't disturb him now, I'll take another opportunity."

"But," added his informer, willing to have some sport,

"he sets off for Bath to-morrow, and may not perhaps be in town again this twelvemonth."

"Is that the case," cried Cibber, nettled at finding his courage suspected, "then I'll e'en chastise him now. You—Mr. Quin, I think you call yourself,—I insist upon satisfaction for the affront you gave me—demme!"

"If you have a mind to be flogged," replied Quin, "I'll do it for you with all my heart—demme!"

"Draw, Sir, or I'll be through your guts this instant."

"This," replied Quin, "is an improper place to rehearse Lord Foppington in; but if you'll go under the Piazza, I may perhaps make you put up your sword faster than you drew it."

A duel was the consequence in the Piazza, where Quin was slightly wounded, and Cibber fled. Quin, however, was able to go to Bath next day, where he passed upwards of sixteen years without any interruption to his ease, contentment, and pleasantry. From the time he retired from the stage his friendship with Garrick seemed to ripen; a regular correspondence existed between them, and he regularly every year visited his friends in London, and passed at that time about a week with the theatric monarch in his villa at Hampton. His last excursion was in the summer of 1765, and was spent with hilarity; but in the midst of it, an eruption appeared on his hand, which the faculty were of opinion would turn to mortification; and their apprehension depressed his spirits. It is supposed that his anxiety brought on a fever; at least, this is certain, that his hand was cured, but that the fever carried him off. He was not always a tractable patient; on the contrary, being a free liver, and fond of good eating and drinking, he was not always obedient to rule. The day before he

died he drank a bottle of claret, and being sensible of his approaching end, said, he could wish that the last scene were over, though he was in hopes he should be able to go through it with becoming dignity; he was not mistaken. He died about four o'clock in the morning on Tuesday the 21st of January 1766.

## LACY RYAN.

I AM perhaps induced to insert some account of this performer, more because he was the friend of Quin, than for his own talents and reputation. He was born in the parish of St. Margaret's, Westminster, about the year 1694, and was educated at St. Paul's School, and afterwards placed an apprentice with Mr. Lacy, his godfather, an attorney; but a strong propensity for the stage ruled his fortunes. In 1710 he was introduced, by the favour of Sir Richard Steele, into the Haymarket company, and performed, in 1712, the part of Marcus in *Cato*, during the first run of that more celebrated than excellent drama. He was then very young, not more than eighteen, but he possessed industry combined with good talent, and rapidly rose in public estimation by the ability he showed in several eminent parts both in tragedy and comedy.

In his person he was deemed handsome, and his judgment was esteemed accurate and critical; no one could understand his author better, nor deliver his part with more correctness or with more musical propriety. His feelings were strong, and when indulged often produced a great impression on his audience; but they were sometimes obtuse, and the effects of his performance were not always similar, far less uniform, in the same part. His

chief defect was in his voice, which he never could master, even to his own satisfaction; and he had the misfortune, on two several occasions, to sustain severe injuries in that most essential organ.

In an accidental affray with some watermen, while yet a very young man, he received a blow which turned his nose, and though the deformity in consequence was not remarkable, his voice, which was naturally a sharp and shrill treble, was altered without advantage. And subsequently some years he was assailed by mistake in the street by several ruffians, who wounded him in the mouth, and so disabled him, that he was unable to perform for some months after, nor did he ever recover his fair natural voice.

In almost any other profession the injury would, perhaps, not have been important; but to a poor man, who depended for his livelihood on his voice, it could not be considered as less than a vital calamity. I can conceive nothing more depressing than a misfortune of this kind; the full consciousness of being able to gratify the expectations of the town remained, but to make them sensible that the injury he had sustained was not of the most essential nature was not in his power. Yet still the good sense of Ryan sustained him under this trying injury; and it is said, that the extreme propriety of his deportment, the solicitude with which he studied his parts, and the carefulness of his delivery, together with his unexceptionable private character, made him ever estimable with the public; insomuch that Frederick Prince of Wales, with many of the nobility, by their kindness and testimonies, contributed to make him some amends for what he suffered.

An anecdote is told of him which can never be re-

peated without sympathy. He lost a favourite nephew, and was particularly desirous to pay the last mark of his affection to the remains. He solicited Rich the manager, to whom he was then engaged, to grant him permission; but with that caprice in the exercise of power which he often indulged, Rich refused, and in consequence the funeral was ordered at an earlier hour; but by the dilatoriness of the undertaker it took place so late, that Ryan had only time to follow the coffin to the church-door, where his feelings so overcame him, that he burst into a vehement fit of tears, and excited, in no ordinary degree, the sympathy of all those who were spectators of the affecting scene.

Were I called on to express distinctly why I have a particular attachment to the memory of Quin, the ever faithful friend of Ryan, I should feel myself at a great loss to explain. But a considerable intimacy with the biography of many actors has made me think there was something about him greater and better than about most of them; his affections seem to have been always gentlemanly, and his conduct high-minded. Towards Ryan he was not only a friend, but a benefactor of that kind by which benefits are conferred as incumbent and obligatory duties. For several years after Quin had retired from the stage as a profession, he annually performed the character of Sir John Falstaff for the benefit of Ryan, and when his own growing infirmities impaired his power, he exerted his influence to procure the patronage of his acquaintance.

That Ryan deserved the estimation in which he was held by those who regarded him as a friend, cannot be doubted; few men evinced more wisdom and prudence

in the selection of their intimates, or so much preferred worthy to genteel society. He died on the 15th of August 1760, at Bath, in the sixty-eighth year of his age, more esteemed for his private worth than for his professional talent, and yet it was of the most meritorious description.

# MRS. WOFFINGTON.

The biography of this celebrated beauty, is calculated to rebuke those who suppose that persons of quality derive from their blood some endowment of manners which ever distinguishes them from the commonalty of mankind. The whole style of her conduct on the stage, and much of her fascination in private life, tended to prove that the dignity of station, and the precepts of the teacher, can only assist Nature; and that even with all the helps that opulence and intelligence can bestow, the universal mother will at times send forth from herself, and amidst the most unfavourable circumstances, individuals of such grace and genius as no effort of education ever can rival. Vulgar manners are, indeed, ever found in the extremes of society—it is only where no restraint exists that genuine vulgarity is found; urbanity is but another word for that kind of manners induced by habit, and by deference for the feelings of others, which it is so much the business of good breeding to inculcate, but which Nature sometimes voluntarily confers. The regal palace and the beggar's hovel are the seats of true vulgarity, and it is only in them that the basest qualities of man are found. But I shall run into a more recondite disquisition than becomes my purpose.

With the exception of Mrs. Woffington, we have but doubtful examples of that spirited, yet lady-like manner,

for which she was so surpassingly eminent, having ever been seen in the low estate of her natal condition.

She was the daughter of John Woffington, a journeyman bricklayer—poor in circumstances, and without one connexion to excite his ambition to break the thraldom of poverty. Still, though in the humblest walk of life, and amidst all the coarseness of vulgarity, his situation was not without the consolation of some of the virtues.

He lived near George Lane, in Dame Street, Dublin—a sober, honest, pains-taking man, full of the kindliest domestic affections, and esteemed by his superiors for the homely diligence with which he attended to his business. His wife managed the finance department of their frugal household with economy, and was as solicitous as himself that their children should, as they advanced in life, repay their anxiety and love.

But their mutual happiness was soon interrupted—a violent fever seized the husband, and his wife solicited in vain permission to send for a physician. He had a prejudice, not uncommon in their class of life, against the faculty, and would not consent until it was too late. It is unnecessary to mention, that even if this honest man had not been ambitious to keep his family comfortable and decent, to the full extent of their means, his condition was never such as could have enabled him to leave them otherwise than very poor. In fact, his last illness, with the medicines and necessaries he required, consumed all he had, and he left his wife and children abject, and in debt. The parish defrayed the expense of his funeral.

The widow, being thus burdened to provide for the support of her family, saw no choice but to become a washerwoman, an avocation which her health and vigour

enabled her to undertake properly. Her neighbours at once commended her humble prudence, and giving her their linen, encouraged her industry. By this means, with hard labour, care, and affection, the poor woman procured a lowly but unimpeachable livelihood for herself and the children.

We have not ascertained the exact day when our heroine was born, but at the death of her father she was about ten years old, and even at that early age her beauty was remarkable. An irresistible gracefulness was conspicuous in all her actions; a pleasing air, and, for her condition, a most surprising elegance, shone, as it were, around her. Her eyes were black of the darkest brilliancy, and while it was said they beamed with the most beautiful lustre, they revealed every movement of her heart, and showed, notwithstanding she was but little indebted to education, that acute discernment which distinguished her career throughout life. Her eyebrows, arched and vividly marked, possessed a flexibility which greatly increased the expression of her other features; in love and terror they were powerful beyond conception, but the beautiful owner never appeared to be sensible of their force. Her complexion was of the finest hue, and her nose being gently aquiline, gave her countenance an air of great majesty; all her other features were of no inferior mould—she was altogether one of the most beautiful of Eve's daughters, and so many charms, combined with her spirit and shrewdness, indicated that she was assuredly destined for distinction.

When in her fifth year, her father sent her to an old woman's school in the neighbourhood, where she continued until his death; she was then removed to assist her mother, and commonly employed by her to carry

home the clothes she washed, in the drudgery of which she was praised for her modesty and her solicitude. It was in the pursuit of this employment that the adventure happened to her which decided her future fortunes.

A Mademoiselle Violante, now no longer remembered but as the first instructress of Mrs. Woffington, was the mistress of a show-booth in Dame Street, and having often seen our heroine fetching water from the Liffey for her mother's use, thought she was destined for a gayer employment. She accordingly resolved to have some conversation with her, and if she answered the expectations inspired by her appearance, to engage her as an apprentice. This resolution was soon carried into effect.

Our heroine one day returning home from one of her mother's friends, to whom she had been in the exercise of her calling, was met in the street by the maid of Mam'selle, who informed her that her mistress wanted to speak with her. She obeyed the message, and the French lady being confirmed in her presentiment, determined to apply to Mrs. Woffington to allow her daughter to be apprenticed. The poor woman accepted the proposal with joy, and our innocent and graceful heroine was assigned to be taught the dramatic art by the sorceress of the booth.

Next day, with a light heart and bright hopes, she quitted the lowly drudgery of her mother's ceaseless toil, and was received with open arms by Violante, who, much pleased with her own discernment, predicted that she was destined to be an ornament, under her tuition, of the stage. She accordingly began instantly to give her pupil instructions, bought her fine clothes, and taught her dancing—made her known to her friends as a young lady she had a particular regard for, and who would, she had no

doubt, realize all the high opinions she had formed of her talents.

Her rapid progress confirmed the anticipations of her mistress, who, proud of her accomplishments, would not consent to withhold her longer than necessary from the public, and decided that she should appear at the next opening of the booth, in a first-rate character. "Small things are great to little men." Mam'selle was full of importance with this affair, and the question she oftenest asked was, in what shall Miss appear? At last, Polly in *The Beggar's Opera* was fixed on, and in the rehearsals never was such a goddess seen.

A young creature, not yet in her teens, without education, practice, or friends, was naturally greatly dismayed at the thought of a public appearance, but nevertheless, from the time that her mistress had intimated that she was to come out as Polly, she applied with industry to the part, and having an excellent memory, was soon mistress of it all. But still she was diffident, and trembled with timidity, and often expressed her dread that she should not be able to give energy and fitness to the sentiments in expression. Her mistress, however, had no fears; she saw only her abilities and beauty, and was lavish in her commendation. All the art that could be employed was put in requisition to awaken public curiosity, and bespeak the applauses of the audience. Had her appearance been at Drury Lane or Covent Garden—among the squares of London, more industry could not have been exerted, than there was on this occasion by the mistress of the booth, to stir the inhabitants of the Dublin lanes.

At length, the fearful evening comes—the hour arrives—the house is full, the curtain is raised, and the play

begins. Trembling like the aspin, lo! our heroine—the applause thunders—she can scarcely look to the audience —every face appears the countenance of a merciless judge—she speaks, and the audience are astonished; the justness of her elocution, the grace of her action, and the elegance of her figure, cannot be sufficiently admired—plaudits are extorted from the most judicious as well as from the most ill-natured. The intelligent predicted her future renown.

Next night she played again the same part, and being more at ease and in better confidence, confirmed all the opinions she had inspired. Fortunately, the commendations she received operated to a favourable issue; instead of tending to fill her with conceit, they only stimulated her emulation—became incentives to her endeavours; and in consequence, though it was but a Dublin booth-audience she had to please, she became as assiduous to merit their approbation as if it had been of the most fashionable description; and verified the truth that, with the greatest natural endowments, excellence is only to be obtained by perseverance and industry. She continued to toil for fame, and was not only regarded as the prop and pillar of the booth-theatre, but as a performer of no ordinary merit. A salary of thirty shillings a-week was soon allowed—a high sum in those days for so juvenile an actress, even at the great theatres,—and she took lodgings for herself. But my task is with her public character. I have only, therefore, to notice with sorrow, that she was for some time induced to withdraw herself from the stage, and to prefer a life of profligacy to the exertion of those talents which first exposed her to temptation.

Having been allured to London, she there determined to renew her connexion with the stage, and accordingly

waited on the manager of Covent Garden theatre to solicit an engagement, and it is said paid no less than nineteen visits to Mr. Rich before she was admitted—at last her patience became exhausted; she told the footman that her name was Woffington, and that she would not wait on his master again. On hearing her name, the man flew to his master, and speedily returned with civil expressions of his readiness to see her.

It would seem that the conduct of the servant when he did not know her, contrasted with his alacrity when she revealed herself, had somewhat moved her petulance, but it ought not. He only did his duty, and it is not to be imagined that he was in either case actuated by any feeling for or against her. No person, who does not choose to say who he is, has any right, especially in London, to expect admission—a small point, both of good-manners and common-sense, that cannot be sufficiently attended to by those who have business to transact with personages to whom they have to seek access.

Our heroine being admitted to Mr. Rich, found him lolling on a sofa, with a play-book in his left hand, and a china cup in the other, sipping tea; around, and about him were seven-and-twenty cats of different sizes at play, some staring at him, some eating the toast out of his mouth, some licking milk from a cup, some frisking, others demurely seated on the floor, and others perched on his shoulders and arms, knees, and even on his head. This is the first time that the magician of Pantomimes was very fitly described, crowned, instead of laurel, with a grimalkin.

An engagement to appear at Covent Garden theatre during the ensuing season was, in due time, brought to maturity, and our heroine came out in her favourite part

of Sir Harry Wildair. The Dublin audience had appreciated her dawning merits in that character, but London alone was capable of discerning her full excellence. Her reception was far beyond her expectations, and every performance revealed new beauties. She acted the same part for two-and-twenty successive nights, and the last with undiminished spirit and applause.

An amusing and characteristic anecdote is told of her at this time. The young gentleman who had allured her from Dublin having made overtures of marriage to a lady in the country, our heroine resolved, in revenge, to break off the match. She accordingly dressed herself in man's attire, and, attended by a male servant, went to the lady's residence, but was at first baffled in her attempts to make her acquaintance; at last she heard of a public ball to be given by some of the gentlewoman's friends, to celebrate her coming of age, and resolved to be present. Properly dressed, and disguised by painting her eyebrows, and using other arts, of which her profession made her mistress, she attended the ball undiscovered by every one, even by her faithless friend. Her dancing and demeanour attracted universal admiration, and watching an opportunity, she had the address to persuade the young lady to walk a minuet with her, and also to become her partner for the remainder of the evening. She then took an opportunity of discovering the real character of the lover. The bride fainted at the tale; the company dispersed; our heroine returned to town, exulting in the success of her stratagem.

After the splendour of her success at Covent Garden, she went back to Dublin, on an engagement with the manager of the theatre there. Her salary from Rich

was nine pounds a-week, but the Irish manager offered her fourteen, which she gladly accepted, and on her arrival she made a grand display with an equipage and two footmen.

The Irish were at this time, and may be so still, much addicted to the theatre. They conceived that no soil but their own could produce first-rate performers, and our heroine was welcomed as one of the best and brightest that the isle had produced: crowds flocked to see her; the house was filled; open flew the doors, and there was an audience.

The distinction she had obtained by appearing on the British stage, the improved charms which time had developed on her person, her native mother wit, polished by an unrestrained conversation with persons of high rank, her easy air, her generous freedom and affable carriage, rendered her a welcome guest to the frequenters of the theatre, and the lovers of those qualities in the fair sex.

The parts she acted in were all of the most conspicuous kind. Her success as Sir Harry Wildair encouraged her to assume Lothario, a performance of singular merit, but it divided the opinion of her admirers. Some thought her action and elocution were not judicious, and also that her conception of the character was erroneous, as it was too obvious that a woman played the part.

Though many anecdotes favourable to her warmth of heart, and animated with the spirit of the character, may be found, not only in the publications of her time, but in the memoirs of her contemporaries, there is a particular instance of her generosity in Dublin, which should not be omitted. Her maid, who had been with her several

years, having gained the heart of a young tradesman, resolved in exchange to give him her hand. On the morning of their nuptials, our heroine called in the girl and said, "You long served me with integrity, and it is time to make you some recompense. You are now going to be united to an honest man, and since he is of some substance, it is not fit you should go to him pennyless. There is something to begin your new scene with, and I request you to accept it as a token of my regard;" so saying, she put a purse of one hundred guineas into her hand.

At this period the theatre was a place of the most fashionable resort in Dublin. It was there, what the Opera House was in London, the rendezvous of all the metropolitan gentry, and perhaps the only scene from which politics were, among the higher orders, systematically excluded: but the manager was too patriotic to be prudent; he attempted to make the stage the pulpit of politics, and in the attempt, being only supported by the galleries, he was ruined, which obliged our heroine to return to London, where she resumed her place on the boards of Covent Garden, and continued a delighting favourite until she left the stage.

By all the records which have been preserved of this fascinating woman, an amazing vein of shrewdness and good sense strikingly distinguished her; even the cause of her retirement shows the firmness of her mind, and the superiority to which she might have aspired. It is related of her, that having heard a sermon which turned on sins similar to her past errors, she was so filled with sorrow at the manner in which she had lived, that she resolved to

quit the theatre and endeavour to improve her life—a resolution which she carried strictly into effect; and without the airs of a devotee or the cant of a Methodist, continued in her penitence with exemplary propriety to the end. She had allowed her mother twenty pounds per annum, but when she entered on her new course she augmented it to thirty; and her sister, whom she educated in France, was married to a man of rank and fortune. In this little domestic arrangement good sense was apparent. She made her mother comfortable; had she raised her to a different sphere, she would only have rendered her condition unhappy.

After her retirement her conduct is spoken of, by all who have expressed an opinion of her, as something like a phenomenon. It was simple, graceful, and pious. It partook of all that was blameless in her previous life. The stage alone she regarded with some degree of aversion, because it had ministered to her early vices, and professed to teach virtue, but was far otherwise in effect. In this respect, some of those who were offended with her retirement, thought they could perceive affectation; but their own spleen deceived them—for she was one of those few penitents who condemn their follies, but do not let their contrition corrode their amiable qualities.

On the 17th May 1757, she took her leave of the stage, in the part of Rosalind; but she did not long survive her retirement, for on the 28th of March 1760, in the forty-second year of her age, she died, and was buried at Teddington. In a monody, published at the time, her professional character is drawn with considerable taste and feeling.

* * * * *

Whene'er we view'd the Roman's sullied fame,
Thy beauty justified the hero's shame.
What heart but then must Anthony approve,
And own the world was nobly lost for love ?
What ears could hear in vain thy cause implor'd,
When soothing arts appeased thy angry lord ?
Each tender breast the rough Ventidius blam'd,
And Egypt gain'd the sigh Octavia claim'd.
Thy eloquence each hush'd attention drew,
While Love usurp'd the tears to virtue due.
See Phædra rise majestic o'er the scene !
What raging pangs distract the hapless Queen !
How does thy sense the poet's thought refine,
Beam thro' each word, and brighten every line ;
What nerve, what vigour, glows in every part,
While classic lays appear with classic art !
Who now can bid the proud Roxana rise,
With love and anger sparkling in her eyes ?
Who now shall bid her breast in fury glow
With all the semblance of imperial woe ?
While the big passion raging in her veins,
Would hold the master of the world in chains.
But Alexander now forsakes our coast,
And ah ! Roxana is for ever lost !

Nor less thy power when rigid virtue fir'd
The chaster bard and purer thoughts inspir'd ;
What kneeling form appears with steadfast eye,
Her bosom heaving with devotion's sigh ?
'Tis she ! in thee we own the mournful scene,
The fair resemblance of a martyr Queen ! *
Here Guido's skill might mark thy speaking frame,
And catch from thee the painter's magic flame !

Blest in each art ! by Nature form'd to please,
With beauty, sense, with elegance and ease !

* Lady Jane Grey, Act v.

Whose piercing genius studied all mankind,
All Shakspeare opening to thy vig'rous mind.
In every sense of comic humour known,
In sprightly sallies, wit was all thy own,
Whether you seem'd the cit's more humble wife,
Or shone in Townley's higher sphere of life.
A Proteus still, in all the varying range,
Thyself the same, divine in every change.

## THOMAS WESTON.

The genius of the stage defies all theory. It might have been expected that a profession, whose object is to afford pleasure, and persons who derived their substance from the favour of the public, would be distinguished for purity of conduct beyond all others; but it is not so. Perhaps, on the contrary, the conduct of the players is the most exceptionable tolerated; and yet certainly there is nothing in the business of the drama which countenances loose manners, and there have been both actors and actresses of more than common propriety in all the scenes of private life. This remark is forced by the memoirs of the present hero. Nothing but his excellence as a comedian could have raised him from the basest condition, for as a man there is nothing in his story to claim respect—all is thoughtlessness and profligacy, with a sort of arch cunning, amusing only to those who did not suffer by its stratagems.

Thomas Weston was the son of the chief cook of King George II.—the office has before supplied the stage with at least one other celebrated performer. Where and when he made his first appearance on the world has not been ascertained, nor is that a point of much importance to determine. As early as his sixteenth year he had formed a predilection for the stage, and was an ardent frequenter of the playhouses. He also, about that period, had be-

come acquainted with several actors, in all probability the letter-deliverers and stage-messengers, and as a subscriber to a spouting-club, deemed it no small glory to pay his crown to the fund which the members had instituted, to enable them to buy a curtain, lamps, and candles, with some of the other paraphernalia of dramatic representation.

His first appearance in this society was as Richard the Third in the tent-scene, and the battle with Richmond—and though his rant was of the vilest description, he received many audible applauses from his spectators as encouragement. Applause in all vocations is the nurse of merit. It was, however, justly said, that in their private opinion his acting was execrable, and his voice in no way adapted for the stage; but whatever other people might think, he was delighted with himself, and revelled in dreams of immortality.

His father procured for him the place of turnbroach, or turnspit, in the royal kitchen, worth, at that time, about thirty pounds a year, and which, like many other important offices of the government, might be executed by deputy: our hero availed himself of the privilege, and held the dignity to his death. He was also an under clerk of the kitchen, and during the lifetime of George II. went once in the yacht with his Majesty to Hanover.

On his return from the Continent he regarded himself as a travelled man, and showed his knowledge of the world by enacting animated parts in many street brawls, and was often bailed from the watch-house. In a word, he was a wild and obstreperous lad, irreclaimable by any kind of advice, and being unfit for civil life, he was sent on board a man-of-war: to this he the more readily consented, in the hope that his father would pay his debts,

rig him out with new clothes, and put money in his purse.

Accordingly, the appointment of a midshipman in the Warspite was procured for him, and our hero, in his uniform, sword, and cockade, strutted for a few days among his old friends at Covent Garden; but being ordered on board, and obliged to obey, he was shown down into the orlope, which in those days was no paradise. Tom thought it an odd place, and a sad fate to be stowed in such a hole, worse than a night-cellar, where no light ever beamed but only that of candles all day long; to eat off a trencher, with a sea-chest for his table, and to sleep in a bag, as he called a hammock. These things have since been a little mended; the orlope is not now quite a purgatory, and the inhabitants have been advanced from younkers to young gentlemen.

Before the ship arrived in the Long Reach our hero was heartily tired of his berth, and his ingenuity was at work to contrive the means of escape; but the captain had given orders that none of the midshipmen should be allowed to go on shore. Three weeks had elapsed; Tom's stock was nearly all consumed; his liquors were drunk out by himself and his messmates, and he could tell how many steps it was from the gangway to the cabin-door, and no new amusement but counting them again was forthcoming.

Necessity, as the proverb says, is the mother of invention, and our hero was fertile in expedient. He had a friend in the War Office, and he got this friend to write him a letter, as from authority, sealed with the official seal, acquainting him that a commission in the army was preparing for him, and to come to London to receive it. The letter duly arrived, was immediately shown to the

Captain, who, not doubting the truth of the contents, gave him leave. Tom jumped into a Gravesend-boat, and bade farewell to his messmates, chest, and bedding, thinking liberty worth them all.

On reaching London, he did not go to his father's, but, as long as his money and means lasted, enjoyed himself. But his wardrobe evidently soon began to decrease, for his cash having the wings of the morning, or rather the bat-wings of the night, was gone, and he had begun to borrow on his clothes; sometimes he dined upon a waistcoat, went to the play on a shirt, and breakfasted upon a pair of stockings—satisfactory indications of his destiny.

In this desperation of his circumstances he thought of the stage; having served a good apprenticeship, and being persuaded, from the strength of his desire, that he had great talents for acting in tragedy, and also being nearly a whole inch taller than Garrick, he accordingly enlisted in Oliver Carr's company, then at Enfield.

This company was in those days famous of its kind; it had many lines of circumvallation round London, and from time to time pitched its tent at every town and village within twenty miles of the metropolis. It was then under the management of Oliver's widow, who preserved the name of the old firm. Things worth nothing are easily had—our hero was permitted by the old lady to join her ranks, but the sharing was so small that no one could live upon it. However, he sold the remainder of his wardrobe, and set off on foot to join the corps, with a young lady bound on the same adventure.

Having reached head-quarters, Tom made his debut in the part of Richard III. and though all the bumpkins in the house were convulsed with laughter at his queer

figure, he wondered what the fools were laughing at, and thought with contempt of Garrick.

The night following, his fair and prudent companion made her first appearance as Mrs. Sullen, and our hero undertook Scrub, in which he acquitted himself with such excellence, that he was astonished at the hearty applause which crowned his performance. Every body was in rapture with him, insomuch that Mrs. Carr, the manageress, when she paid him his share of the profit, no less than three shillings-and-sixpence, advised him to cultivate low comedy. But, like the stag in the fable, he scorned his legs, and admiring his horns, looked tragical.

With the Dowager Carr he visited several towns, at which his benefit and sharings put together amounted to about five shillings per week. It is not, however, to be supposed that Tom subsisted upon so small a sum; wherever he went, he found credit at the public-houses, and left hieroglyphics in chalk behind the doors. But this could not last for ever, so he resolved to return home to beg his father's pardon, and went accordingly to London.

Having come to town, he got an order to the play, where he met an old schoolfellow, who had married a girl with some money. Tom made his case known, borrowed five guineas, with which he enjoyed himself, and changed his filial mind. Instead of going home, he was induced to join another company about fifty miles off, and the manager gave him half a guinea for the expenses of the journey. The usual allowance being one guinea for every hundred miles, and the payment of the carriage of the performer's articles; but our hero, with the generosity of the profession, and inseparable from his circum-

stances, did not put the new company to any expense for his.

He joined in high spirits—saw a tolerable theatre, some regularity, and was again for shining with fret and strut as a hero, but was prevented, and compelled to come forth as Scrub, which he performed with the greatest éclat; he afterwards attempted several parts in tragedy, and had occasion to curse the defective taste and judgment of the audience.

Strolling companies are, in general, partnerships or commonwealths, where all share alike. The manager, for his trouble, care, and finding clothes and scenes, is entitled to four shares, which are called *dead ones*. His duty is to manage the treasury and to prepare the scheme of division, after paying bills, servants, lights, carriages, and all incidental charges, and to keep a book wherein all these matters are set down for the inspection of the company. This the manager of Tom's company balefully omitted to do, and divided the receipts as he thought proper, ever complaining that he was in advance. Our hero, conceiving all not right, took upon himself the office of prolocutor for his brethren, who bravely promised to back him, and insisted on seeing the stock-book. The manager asked him "If he wished to pay the debt the company owed?" Tom answered, "He had a right to see it, whether or not." High words arose, and he was told he should play no more. The rest of the performers, who had promised to stand by him, slunk away, lest their sentence should be similar. Tom damned them all, and directly steered his course to a small troop that was roaring and ranting about twenty miles off.

This new company was worse than Mrs. Carr's; but the manager was honest, for there was nothing to filch,

the receipts of the house not paying more than the incidental charges. Tom, therefore, made away with almost every thing he had, and with another of the performers was reduced to the utmost extremity, till they had only a shirt apiece, which they did not well know how to get washed. At length, they ventured to go a whole day without one, having only a handkerchief about their necks. The washerwoman promised them in the evening in time for the stage, but in the morning they were sadly distressed, as their landlady usually came in for money to provide breakfast before they were up, and it was evident, unless some expedient were devised, would discover the nakedness of the land. In this crisis a happy thought occurred; they resolved to make the sleeve of an old shirt personate the entire fabric. Tom first put it on, and when the old woman came in, stretched out his hand and gave her the money. He soon, however, quitted this company, and set off for London, with all his wardrobe on his back.

On his arrival, he found that Yates and Shuter had taken a booth in Bartholomew fair, and he got an engagement with them during the fair. He paraded himself in his stage-dress, in a gallery before the booth, between each performance, and played nine times in the day for a guinea. This money set him a little upon his legs.

By means of a friend, he was soon after engaged at Foote's, in the Haymarket, in a very low cast; for even at the coming out of *The Minor*, in the year 1760, he only played Dick.

On joining Foote, he married a young lady, a milliner in the Haymarket, and she appeared in the theatre as

Lucy, in *The Minor*: her forte was in singing and sentimental comedy.

His reputation was now rising: at the end of the season he engaged himself and his wife at Norwich, where he stayed some time. He, however, again returned to the Haymarket, and played Jerry Sneak, which stamped him a favourite. At the end of the season he went with Mossop to Dublin, but did not perform with the same success as he had done in England. He, therefore, returned to his engagement at the Haymarket.

One season he went to Chichester, Salisbury, &c. where words arose between him and his wife, and they separated. But he was now on the road to preferment, for at the close of the Haymarket season he got an engagement at Drury Lane at a salary of three pounds per week, and during the absence of Garrick in Italy, played Abel Drugger, and excelled, in public opinion, every one who had played the part.

One of his companions at this time was Dick Hughes, who had the prudence to heal many a breach in politeness which Tom made when in liquor. Tom now took up his residence with a fair one in the elegant purlieus of Mutton Hill, at the bottom of Leather Lane, Holborn, but owing to advances made to his creditors by the managers, he did not receive above half of his weekly salary. This, as he had no forethought, pinched him excessively, and the pittance was entirely owing before it became due. But notwithstanding, he frequently neglected rehearsals, and even absented himself from the performance—an irregularity which obliged Garrick and Lacy to discharge him.

This brought him to his senses, and upon an examina-

tion of his affairs, he found them bad enough. He knew not how to proceed, but, pressed by necessity, he requested two of his acquaintances at Drury Lane to lay his case before the company, and to beg a collection for him. When the circumstances were made known, Garrick forgot his anger, sent him a present supply, and received him into the theatre again. When their benevolence reached him, he had neither hat nor waistcoat to wear; but he returned to his duty, and a night was fixed for his benefit. The day before, however, he did not appear, no bills were printed for his night, and of course there was no play, so that by his caprice the company lost a day's salary, and himself the probable profits that might have accrued.

Foote, who on every occasion was his friend, mentioned his difficulties to several of the nobility, and a subscription of seventy pounds was raised to pay his debts. This stopped some gaps, and he contrived to have a part of it, by giving a friend a couple of notes of hand, for which he gave the money, and Tom spent it jovially, laughing at the trick by which he purchased the pleasure.

His debts, however, again increased, and before even the summer season was over he could never show his head in public, unless on a Sunday. He then lived at Newington, in Surrey, and stole into the theatre, when he wanted, by a way few would have thought of. The doors of the Haymarket were always beset by bailiffs, and the back way, by Mr. Foote's house in Suffolk-street, was also not safe; he therefore went into the Tennis-court, James-street, and getting out at the top of the building, entered the theatre by the upper windows of the dressing-rooms. This road he pursued for a whole season

unsuspected, Dick Hughes always going before him as an advanced-guard, to see that the coast was clear.

During this season Foote took a lease of the Edinburgh theatre for three years, at six hundred pounds per annum, and our hero entered into an engagement with him for Edinburgh, at five pounds per week.

Until the time when he should set out for Scotland, he lived in the Haymarket theatre. During this recess he kept close except on Sundays, and as the dressing-rooms wherein he lived were rather dark and dull, he usually after dinner brought a table into the lobby, and shutting the half-door, which had spikes on the top of it, took the air and smoked his pipe without fear of the bailiff. Once, indeed, he was outwitted; a man, whose face he was unacquainted with, came to the hatch, and having some clothes covered with green cloth, like a tailor, asked if Mr. Foote was at home. Tom unsuspectingly answered yes, and opened the hatch, where the bailiff entered and acquainted him that he had a writ against him. "Very well," said the delinquent, coolly, "follow me to Mr. Foote, who will settle it either by paying the money or giving security." The bailiff followed to the passage leading to the stage, behind the boxes, which was very dark, and along which he groped slowly; but Tom, knowing the way, soon got to the door, which had spikes also to it, and bolted it, then crossing the stage, went through Foote's house into Suffolk-street and escaped. He returned when the coast was clear, and was never after off his guard.

Before, however, he set off for Scotland, Foote obtained leave for him from the Chamberlain for the representation of *The Minor* at the Haymarket, in which he himself played Mother Cole, and Weston Transfer. This

brought him a hundred and eighty pounds, which put him a little upon his legs. But the managers at Drury-lane sent him a demand for upwards of a hundred pounds which he owed them; he took, however, no notice of it, but set out a little sooner for Edinburgh.

His first appearance in the Scottish metropolis was in Sharp, and he was exceedingly well received. In truth, he was considered now the best low comedian the Athenians had ever seen; and at his benefit they proved their regard for him.

In returning to London he played a few nights at York, in some of his celebrated parts. He here met with Dibble Davis, and went with him to Leeds, where they played and had a benefit; and as it was too soon for the Haymarket season, they entered into a scheme of tantaragiging, that is, giving an entertainment consisting of prologues, epilogues, and some detached scenes from plays and farces. By these means they got a few pounds, and returned to London, where, by the interposition of Foote, a reconciliation ensued between him and the Drury Lane managers, and he was engaged at five pounds per week; but one half of the money was stopped to pay the debt he owed them.

An increase of riches caused an increase of demands. His salary at Drury Lane for playing thirty-two weeks was one hundred and ninety-two pounds; this, with his salary at Foote's, and his benefit, being the only person there indulged with one, and also his night at Drury Lane, could not in the whole be estimated at less than six hundred pounds per annum. And yet he was in arrears with both managers, and the old scores had to be wiped off. He lived, however, as if he received the whole of his salary, and was in consequence always

behindhand; rushing into debt where credit could be had, saving his ready money for pocket service, or where houses had no faith. As an instance of his careless extravagance, he bought a chaise and horse for five-and-twenty pounds, which, when in want of money, he sold for less than seven, and it was the full value, owing to the little care that had been taken of them while in his possession.

Debts were continually on the increase, and the managers of Drury Lane had more than once released him; but the frequent repetition of his arrests made them resolve to do so no more. One day, when his name was in the bills, he being seized by a Marshalsea-court officer for a small debt, which the managers refused to have any thing to do with, Tom prevailed with the two officers to go to the play with him, and placed himself in the front of the two-shilling gallery. When the play was to begin, a performer came forward to make an apology for him, as being ill and unable to attend, hoping the audience would accept a substitute. On this Weston got upon the bench, and cried out that it was entirely false; that he was not ill, that he was ready to do his business on the stage, but that at present he was in the custody of a couple of bailiffs for a small debt, for which he had sent to the managers in the morning to give security, that he might have his enlargement; that they had refused, and that he submitted the whole to the consideration of the audience. This trick was successful, the managers sent for him, and the matter was settled.

To prevent any accident of the kind in future, he had apartments in Vinegar-yard, communicating with the theatre; and as he felt no inconvenience from confine-

ment if he had company, gin and purl he thought specfics for every care. He lay in bed almost twenty hours of the day and night, would talk, drink, and dine in it, and had he not been compelled would perhaps have lain from Monday morning to Saturday night. That night was, however, necessary to him, for he then sallied forth, and by some extravagant prank made up for the other six days of tranquillity. He was more expensive in his eating than in his drinking: gin and purl, with punch and port wine, contented him; yet he would eat peas at a crown a quart, and green geese the earliest of the season.

His benefit proved a very beneficial one, and enabled him to stop some pretty large gaps; he then came out of his hiding-place, took a neat house and garden in the street leading up from the bridge at Chelsea, where he lived till about half a year before his death. Here he meant to regulate his affairs decently; but as he had always before done, he did now,—gave in to excess; the pot and bottle were ever on his table, and duns at the door.

Though the receipts from Drury Lane and the Haymarket amounted with his benefits to near six hundred pounds per annum, yet he engaged to play at Richmond every Saturday. Here he received the emoluments of a benefit, but he was a loser by the engagement, as he generally with some crony stayed at Richmond till his business called him to town.

During performance he regularly took a dram, and as the servants of the theatre were forbid providing any, he brought it himself. One evening, coming to the house very late, Foote met him just as he entered the stage-door, and after a slight reprimand for his delay, asked

him what he had in his hand under his coat. "A bottle of Seltzer's spa-water, which the doctor has ordered me to drink." Foote, suspecting it was gin, insisted upon tasting, and was peremptorily refused; at last his request was granted, and the contents of the bottle were proved to be Hollands. Foote threw it on the ground, broke the bottle, and spilled its contents. Weston swore he would not play that evening unless it was replaced, and the manager was forced to comply or dismiss the house, for Tom remained inflexible.

In the winter he was again obliged to keep close; and once, when sent for to Drury Lane, he returned for answer, that unless the managers would pay two hundred pounds for him he could not attend the house; and moreover added, that unless some things were compromised immediately, he should want the following week five hundred pounds more to clear his way to the theatre. Notwithstanding this behaviour, Garrick forgave the man for the actor.

His health at last began to decline, but he himself would not believe it; out of four months of the season which had elapsed at the time of his death, he had been only able to perform a few nights. In his illness he was attended by several eminent persons of the faculty, but without hope; all they could do for him only prolonged his life some weeks, and on the 18th of January 1776 he breathed his last. His funeral was conducted respectfully, with a hearse-and-four and two mourning-coaches, and he was laid beside his father and mother.

Within the circle of his acquaintance he was esteemed good-natured even to a fault, and so liberal, that he would share his last shilling,—every thing he had was common to his friend. Though in public company he

was not remarkable, yet in private with his companions he was social and gay. He rather chose his acquaintance beneath than above himself; he hated restraint, and therefore seldom mixed where he might reasonably expect to find it; and though he was generally in debt, yet it did not proceed so much from the badness of his principle as the want of economy in the management of his affairs, to which he never properly attended. He may rather be said to have squandered his money than spent it. In fine, if we balance his good qualities with his bad, we shall only say of him as of many more of mankind,—there are better and worse than he was.

As a low comedian he stood unrivalled. On his first attachment to the stage his genius was counteracted by his inclination; the former pointed out to him low comedy, the latter solicited him to pursue tragedy and agreeable rakes in comedy. Foote first discerned his real talents, and judged so critically of the extent of his line of acting, that he wrote the character of Jerry Sneak purposely for him. His walk was, however, very narrow, being that of dry vulgar simplicity, but in this he had no equal on the stage. In his Jerry Sneak, Drugger, Scrub, &c. he exhibited so palpable a simplicity of nature in his person, voice, and manner, that contrary to all other actors, the longer and more intensely he was seen, the more he seemed to confirm the spectator in the opinion, that he was not an actor but the real person he represented; at times supporting this delusion in a manner so peculiarly his own, that in those ludicrous distresses which low comedy occasionally affords, he seemed to feel so piteous a pusillanimity, that after the bursts of laughter were over his abjectness almost moved to pity.

# DAVID GARRICK.

The players live in a world and atmosphere peculiar to themselves. To read their lives is to become acquainted with a class of beings, not only different from mankind in their affinities and affections, but governed by motives and impulses which have no similarity to the ordinary springs of action in other men. Whether this arises from that constitutional frame of mind which qualifies them for their profession—to imitate not human beings, but the artificial creations of poetic fancy—or is the result and habitude of thinking the thoughts, and acting the actions of others, is a question not easily answered.

In no instance is the fact of their dissimilarity more manifest than in the life of Garrick. In the records of the stage, and in all the chronicles and traditions of the theatre and the drama, one hears of this accomplished actor as something almost superhuman. Possessed of talents and graces which leave every other kind of human ability in the shade; a luminary of such lustre as to surpass comparison; the meteor of an age, in whose presence every star disappeared, and which every eye followed with admiration,—and yet the incidents of his life claim only that homage from posterity which is due to a clever and adroit person. Instead of the paragon of beings which he appeared to his contemporaries, he shrinks into

something to which there is hesitation in giving more than the epithet of respectable. But an account of his adventures and career will best illustrate the justness of this posthumous estimate.

David Garrick was born in the city of Hereford, on the 20th February 1716, and baptised on the 28th of the same month. The history of his family does not ascend beyond his grandfather, a gentleman of France, who, on the revocation of the Edict of Nantz, came with other emigrants to this country, and settled in London. His son Peter, the father of David, obtained a Captain's commission in the army, and married a daughter of the Rev. Mr. Clough, one of the Vicars of Lichfield Cathedral. Captain Garrick being on a recruiting-party at Hereford, and his wife with him, David was there born, in the Angel inn; an event which seems to have had an influence on his conduct, for he soon after sold his commission, and retired on half-pay to Lichfield, where he continued to reside, managing his slender income with exemplary economy, and much esteemed among the best families for his pleasing manners and gentlemanly urbanity.

He superintended the education of David with uncommon solicitude, and sent him at ten years of age to the grammar-school, then under the mastership of a Mr. Hunter, so odd a combination of the pedant and sportsman, that it is not stretching conjecture into any excess to say, that his eccentricities had probably some effect in exciting the humour and directing the bias of his celebrated pupil.

David, though universally acknowledged to be a boy of quick and lively talents, was not distinguished for application to his studies; on the contrary, he was a prankful truant, and study was to him drudgery.

He early discovered a turn for mimickry, which made his company much sought by his school-fellows; and in this gift his genius for the stage undoubtedly originated. It first showed itself in a passion for the exhibitions of a company of strolling actors who occasionally visited Lichfield. What he so much admired he naturally desired to imitate, and engaged a set of his school-fellows to undertake with him the several parts of a comedy, and thus, in his eleventh year, was the manager of a company. The play was *The Recruiting Officer*, and having drilled his young performers by frequent rehearsals, it was acted before a select audience in 1727. The part which he reserved for himself was Serjeant Kite, in which it is said he displayed great humour and precocious intelligence.

In 1729 or 1730, he was sent to Lisbon, where he had an uncle, a thriving wine-merchant; but being too young and volatile for a counting-house, he returned in the course of the following year, and was placed by his father again under the tuition of Mr. Hunter: still his sprightliness was superior to his assiduity; nevertheless, he made some progress, desultory it no doubt must have been, and only such as a clever boy would snatch in the haste and hurry of a mind intent on play.

It happened that in the year 1735 the celebrated Dr. Samuel Johnson, a native also of Lichfield, formed a design to open an academy for classical education, and Garrick, at that time turned of eighteen, was consigned to his charge, along with seven or eight other lads, to complete his education. Garrick is said to have commenced his pupilage with earnestness, and to have applied to the classics with a promise of good success: but Johnson grew tired of his undertaking, the employment

ill accorded with his reflective genius, and the servile task of inculcating the arid rules of grammar sickened him to disgust. Having struggled with his circumstances for about a year, he resolved to abandon the profession. Garrick, whose activity was becoming adventurous, grew weary of the listlessness of a country town. He longed for a brighter and a busier scene; and having communicated his longings and aspirations to Johnson, he found him animated with congenial sentiments, and they resolved together on an expedition to the metropolis.

Among other gentlemen in Lichfield with whom Garrick was at this period acquainted, was a Mr. Gilbert Walmsley, Registrar of the Ecclesiastical Court, a man of erudition, and a warm and generous friend; he was consulted on the occasion, and his regard for Garrick induced him to write to Mr. Colson, a celebrated mathematician, then master of the school at Rochester, requesting in strong terms that he would take Garrick under his tuition. "He is," said Mr. Walmsley, "a very sensible young man, and a good scholar; of a sober and good disposition, and as ingenious and promising a young man as ever I knew in my life." Mr. Colson being willing to comply with his friend's request, Garrick and Johnson accordingly set off for London on the 2nd March, 1736-7.

The exodus from their early associates of two young men of genius is an interesting event. The precise object of Garrick's adventure is not mentioned; but it would seem to have been some vague intention of studying the law, as in the course of the week after his arrival in London, he was entered a student of Lincoln's-inn; though even then visions of the stage probably floated in his imagination.

On their arrival in London they lost no time in follow-

ing their intentions. Without friends to help him forward, and without adequate means to maintain him during his studies, it was a blind throw with fortune for Garrick to attempt the law; it shows, however, that his mind was filled with the idea of making a figure before the public.

To what pursuit he addressed himself after he became a member of Lincoln's-inn is not very clear, but certain it is that he did not then avail himself of Mr. Walmsley's recommendation to Mr. Colson, of Rochester.

About the end of the year his uncle, to whom he had been sent to Lisbon, came to London with the intention of settling, but his design was frustrated by a fit of illness, which in a short time put an end to his days. By will he left Garrick a thousand pounds, who then had recourse to Mr. Colson, and placed himself under that gentleman's instructions until the death of his father, when he entered into partnership with his elder brother as a wine-merchant in the vicinity of the theatres.

It would seem, both from the locality and what the sarcastic Foote said of Garrick, when he had attained the meridian of his glory, that their establishment was not eminent. "I remember Garrick living," said Foote, "in Durham-yard, with three quarts of vinegar in the cellar, calling himself a wine-merchant." The situation of their business was, however, favourable to the cultivation of Garrick's peculiar talents; a number of clubs were held in the neighbourhood, which the actors frequented, where he was often a guest, and became a distinguished critic on their performances, illustrating his remarks by the display of those talents for mimickry which he early evinced, and which afterwards rendered his personation of Bayes, in *The Rehearsal*, one of the most amusing of exhibitions.

At this period the stage was in a low condition, and the actors were persons of a humble order of life. In tragedy, declamation roared in a stentorian strain; passion was rant, whining grief, vociferation terror, and drawling the gentle accents and soft solicitations of love; the whole character of the drama partook of the same unnatural extravagance. Comedy was a mingled tissue of farce and buffoonery, and tragedy was divorced from Nature. It is true that Macklin was a discriminating performer, and Quin without doubt an actor of great merit, but still the drama was generally sunk to a low ebb; and the players ascribed, as in later times, the coarseness of their own performances to the corrupted taste of the age; as if corruption were a voluntary vice, and not the gradual effect of mediocre endowment.

Garrick had now been about three years in London, during which he had studied the stage with the zeal of a votary; and as the wine business with his brother did not answer the demands of his ambition, he dissolved their partnership, and resolved to try his fortune on the stage.

The remainder of the year he spent in private preparations for the design he had formed. He studied the best characters of Shakspeare with ardour and the intelligence with which genius is ever distinguished in a congenial pursuit, but the more he made himself acquainted with those delicacies and refined inflexions of motive and of character, which make up the life and peculiarities of the great poet's conceptions, his diffidence of himself increased; he perceived, that to embody them, according to truth and nature, it would be necessary to attempt a new style of acting, to found a new school, greatly dif-

ferent from that with which the public appeared to be satisfied; and the hazard of this he duly appreciated.

He was at this time acquainted with Giffard,* then the manager of the theatre in Goodman's-fields, and having consulted him, he was led by his advice to make an experiment of himself in the country. Accordingly, in the summer of 1741, they set out together for Ipswich, where a regular company was then performing; here an arrangement was made for Garrick, under the name of Lyddal, to appear as Aboan in the tragedy of *Oroonoko;* in that disguise he passed the Rubicon.

His appearance surprised the audience, and such was his encouraging success, that in a few days he ventured to cast his black complexion, and show himself in the part of Chamont in *The Orphan.*

The applause received in this new character emboldened him to attempt comedy; and such was the success which crowned his endeavours, that not only the inhabitants of Ipswich, but the gentry of the surrounding country, went in crowds to see him,—a proof of good taste in them and of excellence in him.

The merits of an actor should be of such a nature as to be seen at once; he is no actor whose merits require to be studied in order to be appreciated, nor can he ever expect to reach the highest walk of his profession who is

* One of the Giffards was alive in 1802, in Cornwall, at the rare age of ninety, who not only played with Garrick at Goodman's-fields, but was the Hamlet to Garrick's Osrick at Ipswich. It was conjectured that he was the man who enjoyed the annuity for limited years from Sir Robert Walpole, for whom, it is generally supposed, he wrote the play read by the Minister in the House of Commons in 1737, as the ground-work for the Dramatic Licensing Act.

averse to earn his way by hard labour. Of all the endowments of genius,—that rare and peculiar gift which distinguishes the possessors from other men,—the peculiarity of the player and the singer is the one that shines at first sight; if the excellence is not eminent on the first appearance, it will never be brilliant afterwards, though patient study may polish mediocrity into respectability.

The success of Garrick at Ipswich decided his destiny; he always spoke of it with pride and gratitude, and often said, had he failed there, it was his fixed resolution to return into private life; it, however, confirmed his predilection, and he performed, to the delight of his audience, not only alike in tragedy and comedy, but even in pantomime, and his agility as Harlequin rivalled his humour and his pathos.

Before the end of the summer he came back to London, resolved, in the course of the winter, to present himself before a metropolitan audience; and, in the mean time, when it is said that he concerted all his measures to gain this point, we must interpret them to mean, that he had recourse to those expedients to enhance his celebrity which the players so well know how to employ, and which is, in a special manner, necessary to obtain a fair consideration in the estimation of the public. But on attempting to procure an engagement at one of the great theatres he had the mortification to be rejected. Fleetwood and Rich, the two managers, regarded him as a mere strolling actor, a pretender, and treated his pretensions even with contumely. How often is the man conscious of possessing qualities calculated to obtain distinction, obliged to submit to repulses of this kind!—How much ought such instances of rejected genius after-

wards obtaining renown, to mitigate the arrogance of those who contemn untried worth! Both Rich and Fleetwood had soon cause to rue their rejection of Garrick.

On being repulsed by them he applied to his friend Giffard, and agreed with him to act under his management, at the theatre in Goodman's-fields, for five pounds a week. It cannot be doubted that he felt, in being as it were thus constrained to accept this engagement for such a part of the town, in some degree humiliated; but the consciousness of possessing talents that would shine out at last, in despite of all the mists that obscured his rising, prompted him to exert his best energies. Being determined to wrestle at once with fortune, he chose the part of Richard III. for his first exhibition, and in this great and arduous character he came out on the evening of the 19th of October, 1741.

In all the memoirs of Garrick the effect of his first appearance has certainly been exaggerated, for the amount taken at the door in seven nights was only two hundred and sixteen pounds seven shillings, and yet we are told that the moment he appeared on the stage it was felt by the whole audience as if a new spirit had come among them. The very nature of Richard shone in his countenance, and the extraordinary intensity of visible expression with which it may be said he anticipated the sentiments he uttered, produced the most earnest and vivid sympathy and delight. The astonishment of the audience was extreme, and something like consternation that such awful power should be only imitation mingled with their pleasure, and heightened their enjoyment to the sublime.

The renown of this performance rung through the

town, and the whole metropolis gradually became impatient to see that display of powers which all who had witnessed confessed themselves unable to describe. The theatres of Rich and Fleetwood were deserted,—the fashionables came in troops from all parts of Westminster,—the theatre at Goodman's-fields shone with a splendour not its own,—even Pope, then old, feeble, and querulous, was drawn thither from his grotto at Twickenham, and almost drew new inspiration from the delight he enjoyed,—such was the enthusiasm with which his contemporaries spoke of his early career.

In the course of the season he appeared in a variety of characters, in Lothario, Chamont, and several other parts in comedy, such as Sharp, in his own farce of *The Lying Valet*, Lord Foppington, Captain Plume, and Bayes in *The Rehearsal*.

Growing confident in his powers by such extraordinary success, though Richard III. continued his favourite character, he resolved to attempt the more delicate and perhaps difficult one of Lear. He was moved to attempt this sublime part by an incident in itself exceedingly affecting. He had become acquainted with a man, whom he greatly esteemed, in Leman-street, Goodman's-fields. This old gentleman had an only daughter, about two years old, of whom he was doatingly fond; one day, as he stood at an open window dandling and caressing the child, it suddenly sprung from his arms, and falling into a flagged area was killed on the spot. His mind instantly deserted him,—he stood at the window delirious, wild, and full of woe: the neighbours came flocking to the house, they took up the body and delivered it to him, thinking it might break the spell of his grief; but it had no effect, his senses were fled, and he continued

bereft, filling the streets with the most piercing lamentations.

As he was in good circumstances his friends allowed him to remain in his house, under two keepers appointed by Dr. Munro, and Garrick went frequently to see the distracted old man, whose whole time was passed in going to the window, and there fondling in fancy with his child; after seemingly caressing it for some time, he appeared as if he dropped it, and immediately burst into the most heart-piercing cries of anguish and sorrow; then he would sit down with his eyes fixed on one object, at times looking slowly around, as if to implore compassion.

It is said that from this hint Garrick formed his unparalleled scene of the madness of Lear over the body of Cordelia; and certainly it is not easy to determine from what slight analogies genius derives the elements of the things it creates. It should, however, be recollected that the madness of Lear does not spring either from surprise or grief, as in this case; but is the effect of distraction, indignation mingled with sorrow, and disappointment, and remorse. In that exquisite performance, which touched the heart of the spectators with a sympathy more like grief than only sympathy, he had no sudden starts nor violent gesticulations; his movements were slow and feeble, misery was in his look, he fearfully moved his head, his eyes were fixed and glittering without speculation; when he turned to those around him he paused, seemed to be summoning remembrance, and in every sad and demented feature expressed a total alienation of mind.

As a contrast to the pathos of Lear he appeared in Abel Drugger, and the critics of the day were in doubt

in which part he was the greatest master. Hogarth, whose discernment of nature was of the shrewdest perspicacity, said of Garrick, after having seen him in Richard III. and Abel Drugger, "You are in your element when begrimed with dirt, or up to the elbows in blood."

By this time the managers of Drury Lane and Covent Garden had, in the deserted condition of their houses, begun to repent of their rejection of Garrick, who was now the great Apollo of all the play-going world, whose miracles in Goodman's-fields were attended by an unwearied multitude of worshippers; and Quin, whom they affected to consider as above all competitors, partaking of the managers' spleen, in addition to his own envy as Garrick brightened in his career, said, "This is the wonder of a day,—Garrick is a new religion; the people follow him as another Whitfield, but they will soon return to church again."

The joke was relished and spread among the patrons of the players; but Garrick, when this was reported to him, being then flushed with success, does not appear to have been much disturbed by it, at least, there is no acrimony in the following epigram with which he answered the sarcasm:—

"Pope Quin, who damns all churches but his own,
Complains that heresy infests the town;
That Whitfield Garrick has misled the age,
And taints the sound religion of the stage:
He says, that schism has turned the nation's brain,
But eyes will open and to church again.
Thou grand infallible, forbear to roar,
Thy bulls and errors are rever'd no more.
When doctrines meet with general approbation,
It is not heresy, but reformation."

In May 1742, he closed the season at Goodman's-fields, after a career of the most brilliant success. His fame was spread far and wide. The managers of the Dublin theatre sent him proposals inviting him to perform for them during the summer months, and he having accepted their terms, set out for Ireland, accompanied by Miss Woffington, about the beginning of June.

Garrick and this accomplished actress appeared together in several comedies, and were received with enthusiasm; but the people being prepared for him in tragedy, it was in Richard and Lear that he roused the greatest admiration. The theatre was, on the nights of his performance, crowded with the rank and fashion of Ireland, and the weather being at the time intensely hot, an epidemic rose in every quarter of the town, which dividing the public interest with the player, was called the Garrick fever.

Having completed his engagement, he returned to England with his laurels increased and flourishing, where Fleetwood, convinced that he was no longer a pretender but a man of genius, and afraid that such another campaign as the last at Goodman's-fields would prove a serious injury to his house, opened a negotiation with him. The treaty was soon concluded, a salary of five hundred pounds was agreed upon for the season, the largest ever granted, and Giffard with his wife, at Garrick's suggestion, were also engaged, together with the best performers who had acted with him at Goodman's-fields. This arrangement was soon known, and diffused, according to theatrical exaggeration, universal satisfaction.

This particular engagement is said to have been accepted by Garrick with expressions of more than com-

mon pleasure; it gratified his ambition, and was regarded by him as an assurance that he would one day be the manager and proprietor of the theatre. But when it is considered that his chief study had been to acquire a right and just conception of the principal characters of Shakspeare, it is surprising that the parts in which he appeared, with the exception of Richard and Lear, were of far inferior consequence; at last, however, in the course of the season, he added Hamlet to his list, in which he had made his first appearance in Dublin, and the description of his performance in it, merits to be often repeated.

When he entered the scene, his look spoke the character, a mind weighed down with apprehension and grief. He moved slowly, and when he paused he remained fixed in a melancholy attitude; such was the expression of his countenance, that the spectator could not mistake the sentiment to which he was about to give utterance. The line, "I have that within which passeth show," has been quoted as one of those masterly touches never heard before, but being heard, are never forgotten. In all the shiftings of his feelings, his voice, and even his appearance seemed to change, and when he beheld the ghost, his consternation was such, that the emotion of the spectators on looking at him was scarcely less than if they had actually themselves beheld a spirit. He stood the statue of astonishment, his colour fled, and he spoke in a low, trembling accent, and uttered his questions with the difficulty of extreme dread. It is to be lamented that no description has been preserved of him in the different great scenes of his principal parts, but the testimonies which bear witness to the surprising powers of personation displayed in Hamlet, sufficiently assure us

that he was possessed of wonderful ability in assuming the true characteristics of feeling.

It is not my intention to describe the effect of Garrick's acting in all his parts, but only in those great delineations in which the highest histrionic talent has ever attempted to excel. His performance of Bayes in *The Rehearsal*, although not of that class of characters, has always been recalled, in speaking of his ability as a mimic, as one of his most delightful efforts. At the time it was revived by him, the stage really stood in need of the satire, and he judiciously so altered the piece that it suited the follies and temper of the age. The actors had lost, it is said, all judgment; the vicious taste of those who constructed the fustian, and called themselves poets, had frightened Nature from the stage; and to vie with the extravagance of the authors, the best performers thought they could not show their talents enough. They strutted, they mouthed, they bellowed, and propriety was strangled and trodden in their supernal violence and furor. This was all repugnant to the style of Garrick, and accordingly, in adapting *The Rehearsal* to the stage, and the part of Bayes to himself, he seized each point of the extravagance in his contemporaries which his own taste condemned as absurd. And in consequence, by this part alone, he did wonders for the correction of the public taste; for whilst the conceit and vanity of Bayes were embodied to the life, the faults of the actors were illustrated with the most admirable mimickry. To display their errors in the most glaring light, he affected to teach the players to speak their speeches in what he called the true theatrical manner—and for illustration, he selected some of the most eminent performers, and imitated their style and habit in the

most perfect manner. Although in these imitations he chose the most distinguished players, he yet never attempted Quin. Whether this was out of any awe or sentiment of respect, cannot now be determined, but considering how sharply the veteran had expressed himself against the style of Garrick, there was good taste, from whatever cause arising, in this forbearance.

The following season, 1743-4, opened less auspiciously than the preceding. It appears that Fleetwood, notwithstanding the great success of Garrick, had formed a design to lower the salaries of the principal performers, and with that view communicated his scheme to Macklin, who possessed considerable influence over the mind of Garrick, to induce him probably to accede to the manager's terms. Macklin, however, from some cause or another, broke off from him and joined Garrick, with whom he formed an alliance to withstand the oppression, as it was deemed, of the manager, and if possible, to set up a rival company. The performers flattered themselves that Garrick would have weight enough to obtain a licence for the little theatre in the Haymarket, but the Lord Chamberlain was deaf to their petition. Fleetwood remained inflexible, and the rebels, disappointed in their anticipations, became alarmed for themselves. Their heroism took more the character of common-sense than befitted personages of such high sentiment. They desired Garrick to waive their demands, and to get them restored to their stations in the theatre. Overtures for a general pacification were accordingly made—Fleetwood declared himself willing to receive them all again into grace and favour, with the exception of Macklin, who was excluded from the amnesty.

After the best consideration I have been able to give

to all the circumstances of this affair, Garrick seems to have acted as a gentleman, and with liberality. To pacify Fleetwood, who was particularly incensed against Macklin, he offered to play for a hundred guineas less than he received for the former season, if that manager would re-engage Macklin. The offer was made without effect; but Garrick's concession to Macklin did not end with this attempt—he addressed himself to Rich, the other manager, and prevailed upon him to engage Mrs. Macklin at three pounds a week, and, at the same time, offered to pay Macklin himself six pounds a week until he should become reconciled to the manager.* In the end, however, hostilities were suspended among the belligerents, and peace was proclaimed, by Garrick being announced to appear in the character of Bayes, on the 6th of December 1743, but Macklin, stout rebel, still stood out. On the same day a pamphlet was published, entitled, "The case of Charles Macklin, Comedian." Garrick was the principal person attacked in it, and all he could do was to disperse a hand-bill, stating that the pamphlet contained many injurious aspersions, and requesting the public to suspend their judgment till he should have time, in the course of a day or two, to present a fair account of the whole transaction. Nothing, however, could appease the fury of Macklin's friends.

A large party, led by Dr. Barrowby, went in crowds to the play-house; Garrick appeared as announced, but was not suffered to speak. Off, off, resounded from all parts of the house. The play went on in dumb-show to the end, Garrick, during the uproar, standing aloof at the upper end of the stage, to avoid a thorough pelting of

* But it may be thought that this was not entirely disinterested, as Macklin probably wished to hold him to their compact.

savoury missiles seldom used within a theatre. Macklin and his friends were triumphant for that night.

Garrick engaged Guthrie, the historian, to answer the case of Macklin, and with great dispatch he drew up a reply, and had an eminent friend in one of the Mr. Wyndhams, of Norfolk, who happened to be an admirer of the athletic art. Having selected thirty of the ablest boxers of the time, Fleetwood admitted them into the theatre by a private passage, before the doors were opened, and they took possession of the middle of the pit.

When the overture was playing, one of the boxers stopped the music, and standing up, said in a loud voice, "Gentlemen, I am told that some persons are here with an intention not to hear the play; I came to hear it; I paid my money to hear it, and I desire that they who came to interrupt it may all withdraw, and not hinder my diversion." This, of course, occasioned a general uproar, but the boxers fell upon Macklin's party, and drove them out of the pit. The battle was thus soon ended, and peace being conquered, Garrick then made his appearance, and went through his part without interruption.

Macklin was, however, only defeated, not subdued. On the 12th of December, 1743, five days after the battle, he published another pamphlet; but the tables were turned with the public, and instead of the ill-used victim, which he supposed himself, they saw but a man of an inflexible temper, intent on his own revengeful purposes, without regard to the consequences which they might entail on others. The quarrel ceased to interest, and the remainder of the season passed in tranquillity, and with increasing éclat to Garrick.

In January following the Macklin war, Garrick aspired

to another laurel, and chose Macbeth. On this occasion he resolved to revive the play as written by Shakspeare; for, from the time of Sir William Davenant it had been always performed according to his alterations—indeed, so little was the true text then known, especially among the players, that even Quin, when he heard of Garrick's intention, said, "What does he mean? don't I play Macbeth as written by Shakspeare?" This was the signal for pens; a paper-war was immediately commenced, and the regenerator was assailed from all quarters; but he took the field with his beaver down, or, in other words, in an anonymous pamphlet, and finally, according to promise, made his appearance.

His performance of this great and difficult part was a master-piece, but not equally excellent throughout. It was more characterised by nature than heroism; and in this conception he perhaps evinced great soundness of judgment and purity of taste—for the situations in which Macbeth is placed are so exciting, so full of intense feeling, that any assumed dignity of deportment, or deviation from the simplicity of natural impulse, would have been a blemish. I have heard an authentic anecdote of the manner in which he played the dagger-scene, and the relation of it will serve to afford a tolerably correct idea of his conception and execution of the part. It appears to have been widely different from the celebrated solemnity of John Kemble, and by contemporary accounts, as different too from the restless ecstasy of Quin.

It had happened that the great Lord Mansfield had never seen Garrick's Macbeth, and that one day when they met at some country dinner, his Lordship mentioned the circumstance, and said that he understood the

dagger-scene was even superior to his meeting with the Ghost in Hamlet, entreating Garrick to indulge him with a specimen. Garrick was flattered by the request, and replied that his Lordship was perhaps not aware of the difficulty, for so much of the interest depended on the state of the spectator's mind, produced by the preliminary circumstances of the drama, that it would not be easy to excite any corresponding preparation—"Your Lordship," said he, "cannot but remark the awful supernatural key on which the whole tragedy is constructed. Beings of another sphere and condition than of the earth, have announced their intention to fulfil a fatal destiny on Macbeth, and Fate, in the stupendous character of his lady, has prepared for them an unconscious coadjutor of dreadful influence. He has gained great renown, and been adorned with many honours. Duncan, the King, is his guest, and the ties of kindred, and the obligations of hospitality, and above all, loyalty, claim that rather than bear the knife against him, he should cover him with all his shield; yet, in these circumstances, he has resolved to murder him, and the midnight hour and a storm are accessaries to his terrible feelings at the moment. Under them he is stalking to the chamber of the King, reflecting on the crisis in which he stands, and pausing at the door, agitated with conflicting emotions, he says, "Is that a dagger,"—"Po, po, Garrick, that's all well enough, but come, show me the scene!" cried his Lordship. Garrick bowed respectfully, and replied, "When does your Lordship hold the next meeting?" The judge was rebuked, for Garrick was acting the scene.

Before the end of the month in which Garrick appeared as Macbeth, *Regulus*, a tragedy, was produced. The author was a Mr. Havard, the author of *Scanderbeg*,

and a tragedy, entitled *Charles I.*, both of that respectable degree of mediocrity which the world, without repining, soon forgets. *Regulus* was well received, and the story, familiar to every school-boy, was told with clearness in correct language. Garrick personated the hero, and his energy and sensibility gave sentiment to the piece, which affected the audience with a degree of sympathy inconceivable, when one reads the unpoetical common-places of the composition. The play accomplished its fate. It was laid aside after the eleventh night.

About the end of March, in the same year, another new tragedy was produced, a free translation of Voltaire's *Mahomet;* a drama which many critics of the Continent esteem as of great merit; but, in truth, it is only an ingenious piece of artificial enthusiasm, lacking in the vigour of natural passion. It is a mere play—and is as like the genuine world of man, as painted actors and painted scenes are like its persons and circumstances. The part which Garrick represented was Zaphna, and it received all the exaltation which his genius could confer on insipid verse and rodomontade; neither clergymen nor stock-jobbers should lay their mittened hands on the sensibilities of solemn tragedy. Voltaire, we allow, has constructed some pretty dramas in verse, but he never looked into the heart of man. He was by nature a satirist, and never could see aught in the human bosom but selfish purposes and sordid designs.

The season of 1744-5 was that in which Garrick reached the summit of his profession, though he had not then gathered all his glory. He was the Lear, the Richard, the Hamlet, and the Macbeth of Shakspeare, or as nearly so as art can approach to nature; but he had

also a strong predilection for comedy, and in this season he extended his walk in that line.

At this time the modest star of Thomson, the delightful author of "The Seasons," was beginning to peer above the theatrical horizon, and he ventured to bring forward his tragedy of *Tancred and Sigismunda*, a composition full of beauties in the closet, but actionless upon the stage. The rules which Pope has given in his "Epistle to Lord Burlington," on gardening, were never more applicable than to this tender and pleasing poet—

> No pleasing intricacies intervene,
> No artful wildness to perplex the scene;
> Grove nods to grove, each alley has a brother,
> And half the platform just reflects the other—

for Thomson's forte was not dramatic; even his elegant power of allusion, which renders "The Seasons" at once the sweetest and the most refined poem in the language, is scarcely perceptible in his dramas.

Mrs. Cibber played Sigismunda to Garrick's Tancred, and with two such performers the piece could not, with the author's beautiful verse, be otherwise than successful.

After Thomson's play, Garrick appeared in Othello, in which he had made an attempt before; but after the best consideration I have been able to give to all the different accounts of this performance, it must, I fear, be pronounced a failure. Garrick, however, continued to repeat the part occasionally, but it never was with him a favourite, and as he advanced in life, he retired gradually from it, until he performed it no more.

It would be a curious speculation to attempt to determine the cause of Garrick's failure in Othello, for a failure it must be considered, as compared with his transcendency

in other parts. In the just and natural inflexion of the voice, accordant to the feeling and passion to be expressed, we have no cause to doubt that he was equally excellent. The probability therefore is, that he failed in the expression of the countenance alone, and that this default and short-coming to expectation was entirely owing to the black disguise he was obliged to assume. But why is Othello always performed as if he had been a negro? It is true that Shakspeare makes him spoken of as such, and yet he was only a Moor—dark, doubtless, but not much darker than the Spaniard; a blackamoor, undoubtedly meant a negro—and the very name, arising from the intervention of the *a* between the adjective and the substantive, shows that it was intended only for the blacks, there being in the sound a something which resembles the accent of the negroes.

The season of 1745-6, was remarkable in the life of Garrick, as well as in the history of the kingdom. Theatricals were dull in London, and the celebrated Lord Chesterfield, the wit among Lords, being Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, and keeping a gayer court than that of the Sovereign himself, Garrick went to Dublin, and performed there with Sheridan, the father of the author of the School for Scandal.

A short time before Garrick's arrival with Sheridan in London, Spranger Barry had made his first appearance. He came out in Othello with transcendent lustre, and his success, as compared with Garrick in that part, was so extraordinary, as to inspire all who witnessed his performance with unbounded admiration. It is due, however, to the generosity of Garrick's disposition, to mention that no one was louder in their approbation of Barry's performance than himself.

By the time Garrick returned from Ireland, in May 1746, Rich, the Covent-Garden manager, who had rejected him with disdain, was convinced, by his success, that he was a great performer, and anxious to engage him, offered most advantageous terms. As a farther inducement, he proposed to open his theatre, which was then shut, for six nights, and to divide with him the profits. The offer was embraced, and Garrick played his capital parts: he was thus secured for the winter to Covent Garden.

That winter proved the most flourishing which Covent Garden had ever known. Quin, Garrick, Mrs. Cibber, Mrs. Pritchard, Wood, Ryan, and Chapman, formed the most effective company ever assembled; certainly not at all inferior to that golden age of the drama which saw Booth, Wilks, and Cibber in the same scene. It was during this season that Garrick and Quin appeared less as rivals than as reciprocal competitors, doing their best to obtain public favour. They frequently acted together in the same play. In *Jane Shore* Quin was Gloucester, and Garrick Lord Hastings; and in the first part of Henry IV. Garrick played Hotspur, to give new attractions to Quin's Sir John Falstaff, one of the most perfect impersonations which the stage has ever exhibited. This generous contention interested the public, and with the fashionable world Covent Garden was the rival of the Opera.

Garrick had already twice attempted dramatic composition in two farces, *Lethe* and *The Lying Valet*,* both of

* Garrick was but little scrupulous in making use of the ideas of others. *The Lying Valet* was taken from *The Lass with Speech*, an unpublished play by Cunningham the poet, who was himself a player. He dedicated his poems to Garrick, who sent him two guineas on the occasion, which he returned, begging that they might be added to the theatrical fund.

which, particularly the latter, may be said to be still in favourable possession of the stage. In this year, January 1747, he produced *Miss in her Teens*, a farce, calculated to afford much amusement, though it is not often played. The fable is well imagined, the incidents spring naturally out of one another, with frequent unexpected turns, but which never violate the rules of probability. It, however, must be confessed, that as it turned more on fashion than on manners, it is one of those plays which require an adaptation to every new age. Garrick, in the mincing and missy character of Fribble, is said to have been exceedingly comic.

In the February following, the play of *The Suspicious Husband*, a commendable, heavy affair, such as might have been expected from a clever, worldly clergyman, was brought out. It has but still wit; but the scenes and equivoques are managed with skill, and it is occasionally performed. Garrick's part in it was Ranger, and he acquitted himself with great spirit throughout the whole piece. The play, however, has been regularly sinking into oblivion since his time.

The season closed at the usual time, after a spring tide of success. Garrick and Quin never played better, and throughout it all they had no difference; Garrick allowed his senior rival the applause due to him, and always spoke of his Falstaff as the perfection of acting. He admired Quin's vein of natural humour, and delighted in repeating his roughest and most sarcastic jokes. The following story is one of the many he delighted to tell.

Quin engaged a party of friends to sup at the Crown and Anchor. Garrick was of the number; at a late hour the guests made their escape from more wine. Quin having, or pretending to have, some business to settle with Garrick, detained him after the rest were gone.

When they were ready to leave the tavern, a shower came down in such a deluge that they could not think of stirring. No hackney-coach was on the stand: two chairs were ordered: the waiter reported that only one could be found. Garrick proposed that Quin should go first, and he would wait till the chair returned. "Poh! that is standing on ceremony," said Quin; "we can go together." "Together? impossible!" "Impossible! nothing more easy," replied Quin; "I will go in the chair, and you can go in the lantern." Quin was a portly personage and David a manikin; but the humour of the story consisted in the spirit of the telling it. It is the misfortune of all good things, especially those of the players, which depend on manner, seldom to interest, on repeating, by any other party than the first relater.

About this time an incident occurred which had a great effect on the fortunes of Garrick. A banking-house, which had purchased Drury Lane theatre from Fleetwood, was under the necessity of stopping payment. The patent was at that time a grant from the Crown for twenty-one years, and had only a few to run. Lacy obtained a promise from the Duke of Grafton, then Lord Chamberlain, that if he purchased, he should have in due time a renewal of the patent. The preliminaries being settled, Lacy, in order to ensure success to his undertaking, invited Garrick to join him in the speculation. Garrick jumped at the bait: the dream of his ambition was in his power to be realized—his friends assisted him to accept the offer, and accordingly he was enabled to advance eight thousand pounds, and to reach the goal of his hopes. In the month of April 1747 an agreement was completed between them.

The two managers opened the theatre on the 15th of

September 1747, with a strong company, of which Barry was a member. Garrick spoke a prologue on the occasion, written by his early friend and fellow-adventurer, Dr. Samuel Johnson, not unworthy of his sonorous pen; and Mrs. Woffington delivered an epilogue, the composition of Garrick himself.

In January 1748, Garrick, who had studied the part of Jaffier, in Otway's *Venice Preserved*, brought out that tragedy, with the advantage of Quin in Pierre; but he falling ill, it was undertaken by Barry, who did not equal him in the character. Jaffier was more suitable to his powers; nevertheless, the play as it was performed was considered a masterly exhibition.

Garrick then brought out the comedy of *The Foundling*, to which he wrote the epilogue; he also revived *Romeo and Juliet*, in which Barry played Romeo, but he took himself no part in it; he likewise revived *Much Ado about Nothing*, and played Benedict to Mrs. Prichard's Beatrice, in which both parties received the greatest applause. It was in this year also that Garrick brought out *Irene*, the tragedy which his friend Johnson brought in his pocket to make his fortune, when they left Lichfield together, a work of superior literary merit. Full justice was done to it in the performance by the best strength of the company, but it was sustained by perseverance only nine nights, and then laid on the shelf.

To the friendship of Garrick for the author, the acceptance of the play for representation can alone be ascribed, for it is impossible to conceive that he could be insensible to its deficiency in dramatic merit, or so dazzled with the mere verbal sonance of the language, as to suppose it alone would charm an audience for an entire evening. Dramatic poetry was not, indeed, the forte of Johnson's

genius. An acute perception of moral beauty was his chief attribute, and if in that he was eminent, certain it is he has had his full share of respect. Johnson was, in fact, one of those characters who are regarded with esteem by mankind, more from an opinion of what they are capable of doing than for what they do.

It was also in this season, so busy in novelties, that Aaron Hill's translation of Voltaire's *Merope* was brought out, a tragedy which partook in no inconsiderable degree of that pomp of phraseology which the audience felt so ponderous in *Irene;* but the incidents are striking, and with the help of Garrick and Mrs. Cibber, it proved most successful on representation.

Garrick was now thriving; his management of the theatre was judicious; good taste and excellent sense appeared in all he undertook. Nature had gifted him with talents, and these were applied to their proper use with that skill and industry which deserved and gained success. Under these circumstances he resolved to marry, and Mrs. Woffington, who had long lived with him, was said to have been so far the object of his first choice, that she herself declared he had tried a wedding-ring on her finger. We are, however, inclined to question the story, for the simple reason that Garrick was so evidently intent through life to raise himself in society, that it seems improbable, notwithstanding the example of similar things happening to men of equal reputation for prudence. But whatever may have been his intention, it was not carried into effect. The beautiful Violette, a dancer of supreme excellence, a native of Vienna, who took that Italian name, attracted his affections; she was patronized by Lord and Lady Burlington, who on her marriage-day presented her with a

casket of jewels and six thousand pounds, a gift so munificent that it confirmed a rumour which was then in vogue that she was the natural daughter of the Earl.

With whatever assiduity Garrick may have guarded and cultivated his own fame, he was undoubtedly a man not over jealous of merit in others; on the contrary, it may be justly said, that he had pleasure in bringing forward rival talent, as if conscious that it was only by competition with great merit that his own superiority could be best shown. The entire season which he performed with Quin without a difference was honourable to his temper and liberality; and in the next season a new instance of what may really be called his magnanimity was displayed in bringing out *Othello*, in which he had not met with complete success, and in giving the part to Barry, while he himself took the character of Iago. In the course of the same year he also brought out *Edward the Black Prince*, by William Shirley, a spiritless imitation of the manner of Shakspeare.

In the following February (1750), be brought out Whitehead's tragedy of *The Roman Father*, a composition in which the style and fable are both equally refined and classical. Garrick, who excelled in the parts of aged men, played the principal character, and the piece was admired and applauded on the stage, while the critics bore testimony to the beauty and purity of its literary merits in the closet.

All had hitherto gone prosperously with the dramatic monarch; but players as well as men are destined to suffer change, and to know the stings of vicissitude. Quin, who was on the pinnacle of greatness at Covent Garden, began to scowl at the flourishing fortunes of his rival, and, like other potentates, thought in envious pride

only of war: accordingly, by all the arts of theatric diplomacy, he availed himself of some petty discontents, which were discerned in the phalanx of Drury Lane, and in the end induced Barry and Mrs. Prichard to revolt. This defection was followed by that of Mrs. Woffington, so long the bosom friend of Garrick. But our hero met the shaking of his fortunes courageously; he composed his manifesto in the shape of a prologue, more remarkable for its fitness than its felicity. The campaign was opened with *Romeo and Juliet*, in which Mrs. Bellamy played the heroine and Garrick the lover; Barry and Mrs. Cibber, in the same parts, shone glorious on the boards of Covent Garden, and the battle raged for twelve nights with undiminished bravery: which was to win was still the question, when the town grew tired of the contest, and Rich, the manager of Covent Garden, deemed it expedient to change the play. Garrick thus remained master of the field, having played it thirteen nights. This war gave rise to the following playful epigram in allusion to the story of the play:—

"What play to-night?" says angry Ned,
As from his bed he rouses;
"Romeo again!" he shakes his head,
"A plague on both your houses!"

Garrick soon after revived Congreve's tragedy of *The Mourning Bride*, a drama that without petulance may be said to owe much of its fame to a single passage, which, though fine in itself, is indebted for its celebrity to an extravagant eulogium of Dr. Johnson—it is the description of the interior of a cathedral:—

"Now all is hush'd, and still as death,—'tis dreadful!
How reverend is the face of this tall pile,

Whose ancient pillars rear their marble heads,
To bear aloft its arch'd and ponderous roof,
Looking tranquillity. It strikes an awe
And terror to my aching sight; the tombs
And monumental caves of death look cold,
And shoot a chillness to my trembling heart."

Hitherto I have only spoken of Garrick's professional merit, and of those parts in which he was allowed to excel all his competitors; but besides his superiority as a player, and his general accomplishments as a gentleman, he is entitled to no small degree of praise for his endeavours to introduce a more various and intellectual character into our recreations. He used to say, according to Murphy, that a good play was the roast-beef of Old England; and that song and gaudy decorations were the horse-radish round the dish. The remark had perhaps some pungency in it, but it did not enter so deeply into his opinions as to restrict him from attempting to rival Rich of Covent Garden in his own way. Accordingly, in the course of the Christmas holidays, in 1750, he brought out a splendid pantomime, entitled *Queen Mab*, which, as Bayes says in *The Rehearsal*, contained every thing that could elevate and surprise. But the life of Garrick, during the period in which he was the manager of Drury Lane theatre, comprehends the history of the English stage, and to enter into any consecutive relation of the plays he either introduced or revived, or the different endeavours of his management to cater for the recreation of the public, would require larger dimensions than the nature of this work affords. But although in all that related to the public entertainments in which he bore a part, he will ever be considered as eminently successful, it yet must not be supposed that he was universally so, or that envy was to him less faithful in her attend-

ance than to others who rise above the ordinary standard of their contemporaries. In the period which elapsed between his first pantomime and the year 1756, his career, both as a manager and performer, may be said to have been consistent and uniform; the stage was well conducted, and the exhibitions were universally allowed to be in general far beyond mediocrity. But in that season the state of politics among the people was unfavourable to some of Garrick's designs for enlarging the dominion of the theatre.

During the summer of 1755, he had planned several schemes for the entertainment of the town, and among other means for giving them effect, invited a distinguished dancer to perform in a ballet which he had splendidly conceived. This artist, as he was called, was a Monsieur Noverre, who arrived in London with a band of no less than a hundred other performers, and immediately began to make preparations for his corps to exhibit. But they became the object of the malice and ridicule of all the wits about town. The indignation of the lower orders was kindled, that such a number of Frenchmen, as they call all foreigners, should be brought among them. Still Garrick thought that this patriotic prejudice might be allayed, and as the King, George II. had never seen him act, he so contrived it, that on the night when the dancers were to make their first appearance, his Majesty was induced to command his own performance of Richard III. But when the tragedy was over and the dancers entered, no respect was paid to the royal presence, all in the theatre was noise, tumult, and commotion. The King was amazed at the uproar, but being told that it was because the people hated the French, he smiled and withdrew. On that occasion, a gentleman, one of

the most celebrated wits of the time, who had been in attendance on his Majesty, went afterwards to the green-room, and Garrick, anxious to know how the King had been pleased, inquired what his Majesty thought of Richard; "I can say nothing on that head," replied the courtier, "but when the actor told Richard,—'The Mayor of London comes to greet you,' the King roused himself, and when Taswell entered, buffooning the splendid annual, his Majesty said, 'Duke of Grafton, I like dat Lord Mayor;' and when the scene was over his Majesty exclaimed again, 'Duke of Grafton, dat is a good Lord Mayor;' and when Richard was in Bosworth-field, roaring for a horse, his Majesty said, 'Duke of Grafton, will dat Lord Mayor not come again?'"

In the mean time the riot in the house was going on, and in the end, after three or four nights were successively tried to procure attention, the poor dancers were fairly driven from the stage, and the interior of the theatre, as in similar affairs when John Bull is in wrath, was defaced and the decorations demolished.

At this epoch, when Garrick was attempting to introduce the Continental ballet on the English stage, it ought not to be forgotten that he did not show his wonted acumen in judging of the legitimate drama. He rejected Home's tragedy of *Douglas*, one of the few performances which still retain, both in representation and reading, "all their original brightness." His life, however, continued to afford few incidents for biography; it was prosperous and pleasant, and flowed in the same even tenour for many years: but about the beginning of 1763 another riot took place, in consequence of an attempt of the manager to introduce a new regulation, by which, during the run of a new play, no half-price

was to be admitted. The audience gained their cause, but the incident deserves more particular notice as an instance of the good sense with which Garrick for so many years managed Drury Lane. On the second night of the riot, the malevoli, as they were called, returned to the charge, and summoned the manager to appear before them. As soon as he came on their leader stood up, and, to the astonishment of all his friends present, said to Garrick, "Will you, or will you not allow admittance at half-price after the third act of every piece, except a new pantomime during its run in the first winter?" Garrick, with the most disarming suavity, complied with the request, and the rioters were triumphant. But it must be acknowledged, that John Bull did not on this occasion show all his wonted generosity and love of justice; for during the disturbance on the preceding night, Moody, one of the actors, arrested one of the malevoli in the act of setting fire to the scenery. This material service was deemed an offence which required an apology. Moody was vehemently called for, and on his appearance his turbulent judges in the pit ordered him to ask pardon, to which, with great presence of mind, he answered, "Gentlemen, if by hindering the house from being burnt to the ground, and saving many of your lives, I have given you cause of displeasure, I ask your pardon." This their high mightinesses deemed an aggravation, and they commanded him to implore pardon on his knees; but Moody replied with energy, "Gentlemen, I will not degrade myself so low, even in your opinion; by such an act I should be an abject wretch unfit ever to appear before you again." He then made his bow and walked off the stage, and Garrick received him with open arms. The

riot now assumed a new character; the manager was again obliged to appear, and being ordered to dismiss Moody for his insolence, he assured them that Moody, though he was a useful actor, should not perform on his stage so long as he remained under their displeasure. He then retired, and once more embracing Moody, assured him that his salary should be regularly continued.

On the next night the confederates were determined to renew the contest at Covent Garden theatre. The manager there refused to submit to their dictation, and the interior of the house was instantly laid in ruins. Redress at law was solicited on the ringleaders, and Lord Mansfield so impressively delineated at once their folly and guilt, that they were ashamed of themselves; Covent Garden was thus left at liberty to proceed according to the new regulation, but Garrick was obliged to submit to his capitulation.

The last new part in which Garrick appeared, was Sir Anthony Bramville, in Mrs. Sheridan's sentimental comedy called *The Discovery*, which was brought out in 1763. The play itself has considerable merit, and in this character, a solemn coxcomb of antiquated manners, he displayed a whimsical humour that added more interest to the piece than has been since his time discernible in it. He went on, however, repeating his favourite parts, and closed the season with apparent composure; but the humiliations* of the riots, and other incidental anxieties, preyed upon his heart in secret, and he was advised,

* One of the nights when Garrick and Mrs. Cibber played, the cash receipts of Drury Lane amounted to no more than three pounds fifteen shillings and sixpence.

both on his own account and the health of Mrs. Garrick, to go abroad, and accordingly, on the 15th of September 1763, he set out for Dover.

Health, and the dissipation of his chagrin, led him to proceed, without material interruption, to the baths of Padua, which proved medicinal to Mrs. Garrick, and the change of scene, as well as the novelty of the amusements in which he participated, essentially contributed to the restoration of himself. But he was sometimes disconcerted—perhaps as often diverted, by the hauteur with which, as a player, he was treated by the Italian nobility; the English travellers, however, whom he met with, always evinced towards him the greatest respect. The Duke of Parma was, however, an exception, to the general pride affected by the Italians, and Garrick was several times invited before him to display "the glory of his art." But the scene with the celebrated Mademoiselle Clairon, on his return, at Paris, was one of the most brilliant of these favourite exhibitions, considering the talents of the performers, ever witnessed.

A large party were assembled, and at the request of the company, Clairon and Garrick consented to exhibit specimens of their theatrical talents. The contest between them lasted some time, with great animation on both sides. It was however remarked, that the French gave the preference to Garrick; with equal politeness, the English applauded Clairon; but Garrick perceiving that his admirers were unacquainted with the English language, he was induced to exhibit in action the grief and delirium of the old gentleman who dropped his child in fondling it, and whose madness became the model of his own in Lear. The influence of the representation on the

company was astonishment, succeeded by tears; and Clairon, in a transport of admiration, caught him in her arms and kissed him.

After about a year and a half's absence, Garrick returned to London, to the universal delight of the play-going world; and the King honoured his first re-appearance with his presence. The joy of the audience on this occasion was not expressed by the usual clapping of hands and the clattering of sticks, but in loud shouts and huzzas. It was remarked, by those who best appreciated his abilities, that by visiting foreign theatres he had greatly profited. His action, always spirited and proper, had become easier, his deportment more graceful, his manner more polished, and that the whole style of his acting was improved.

Some short time after his return, Dr. Goldsmith applied to Garrick with his comedy of *The Good-natured Man.* He had early attacked the player, when he was very young, and Garrick remembered the unprovoked malice afterwards, it is alleged, by declining the play; other and more commendable reasons have been assigned, but it cannot be questioned that the original injury of the Doctor's satire was recollected, and when a reason of so much importance to a spoiled child of the public can be discovered, it is unnecessary to look for a mere professional cause. However, in time they became mutually reconciled; he even went so far, though he did not act in his comedy of *She Stoops to Conquer*, to present the Doctor with a humorous prologue, and secured himself a niche in that beautiful temple of *Retaliation* which Goldsmith constructed over the members of the famous Literary Club.

Among other devices which occurred to the mind of Garrick for the augmentation of his fame and fortune, the Jubilee at Stratford-on-Avon, in honour of Shakspeare, ought not to be forgotten; no author ever better merited such a celebration than the poet; but the sober habits of the people, and the precarious temper of the climate, I fear, must ever procure for the idea of such a fête the epithet of preposterous.

Garrick afterwards brought the Jubilee to Drury Lane theatre, where it was performed for nearly a hundred nights; but the memorials which have been preserved of the representation do not reflect much honour on the taste of the public, and justly exposed Garrick to some degree of ridicule.

Among other critics of whom the representation of the Stratford Jubilee, in the winter of 1770, stirred the gall, was Foote, a man naturally of an envious disposition, and who, from some unknown prejudice, is said to have secretly cherished an antipathy to Garrick. His spleen vented itself in a scheme for a burlesque imitation of the pageant, in which a character, made as like Garrick as possible, was to be introduced. Foote, however, being under personal obligations, was by the interference of a nobleman, who patronized them both, persuaded to forego his satire.

By the death of Mr. Lacy, in 1773, joint patentee of Drury Lane, the whole management of the theatre devolved on Garrick. But he was now far advanced in life, approaching three-score, and was afflicted with chronic disorders. His friends, considering the increase of anxieties, were in consequence induced to advise him to retire from the stage, but he did not immediately adopt their advice. When, however, it could no longer

be wisely withstood, he distinguished his retirement by an act of munificence that ought to be inscribed on his monument. Having, from his return in 1765, taken an active interest in promoting the Theatrical Fund, which had been established during his absence on the Continent, he, on the 18th of May 1774, produced to an assemblage of the players, called together in the Green-room of Drury Lane, satisfactory proofs of what he had done for the Fund, and in January 1776, the committee, by his advice, was induced to apply for an Act of Incorporation; all the cost and charges of this act he defrayed himself, and on the 10th of June in that year, when he took his leave of the stage, in the part of Don Felix in *The Wonder*, he bestowed on the Fund the monies received at that final appearance. Soon after, he sold his interest in the patent of the theatre for the sum of thirty-five thousand pounds.

His theatrical career being now over, I may be permitted to offer a short estimate of his life and character; a task the more delightful, for if as a player he had no equal, he was a man distinguished for many virtues and accomplishments.

Mr. Garrick was small in stature, but handsomely formed, and his deportment was graceful, easy, and engaging. His complexion was dark, but his countenance was enlivened with black eyes, of singular brilliancy. His voice was distinct, melodious, and commanding, and possessed an inexhaustible compass, or rather seemed to do so, for he managed it with such appropriate discretion that it was never heard pitched beyond his power.

It would be unfair towards the character of this great artist, to say that he was never excelled. In some parts others have surpassed him, but all his contemporaries

agree that he beggared competition in those characters for which he was most celebrated; and that he never performed any part without impressing his audience with admiration. In every department of the drama he did not exceed all his rivals; but there were characters in which he had none, and in which he gave the passion with the fidelity of Nature, and the regularity and beauty of consummate art.

His talents as an author were not of the first class; but he possessed, in many of his compositions, an ease and grace of no ordinary kind; and had he not been the glory of the stage, he would have in consequence commanded the respect of posterity for the magnitude and variety of his works as an author, in which capacity, however, he has been praised too much. The farce of *High Life below Stairs* has been ascribed to him, and printed with his works, but it is the production of his friend, the Rev. James Townley,* to whom he was in-

* The merits of Townley are not generally known: he was born in London in 1715, and received his education at Merchant-Tailors' school, from whence he was elected to St. John's College, Oxford. Soon after taking orders, he was chosen morning preacher at Lincoln's-Inn chapel, and lecturer at St. Dunstan's in the East. In 1740, he married Miss Jane Bonnin, of Windsor, descended from the Poynz family, and related to the late Dowager Lady Spencer, through whose patronage he obtained the living of St. Bennett, Gracechurch Street, London. He afterwards became Grammar-master to Christ's Hospital, and in 1759 was chosen high master of Merchant-Tailors' school, in which office he died in 1778. He held from his friend Garrick the valuable vicarage of Hendon. His situation, as a teacher, seems to have been the only cause of his concealment as a dramatic author. *High Life below Stairs* was produced as early as 1759, and still delights. In 1764, *False Concord* was produced at the benefit of his friend Woodford, and next year, under the auspices of Colman, his farce of *The Tutor* was also performed. *False Concord* contains in Lord Lavender,

debted for other occasional literary assistance. The same gentleman wrote the comedy of *False Concord*, which, I believe, has never been printed, and was only once performed. In the sketch of the Life of King, will be seen some curious notices respecting it, and how Garrick and Colman nearly quarrelled: *The Clandestine Marriage*, there is reason to suspect, was founded on *False Concord.*

Mr. Suds, a rich soap-boiler, and a pert valet, the originals of Lord Ogleby, Mr. Sterling, and Brush of *The Clandestine Marriage*, by Garrick and Colman, first performed in 1767. On the authority of Mr. Roberdeau, the son-in-law of Townley, it is stated that part of the dialogue is nearly verbatim. Being long acquainted with the family of Mr. Roberdeau, I have endeavoured to procure, without success, the Manuscript of *False Concord.* Whether it exists among any other members of Mr. Townley's family is doubtful. His merits, however, were not confined to his dramatic works; he assisted Dr. Morell in Hogarth's *Analysis of Beauty*, and was distinguished as an admired preacher.

The following *jeu d'esprit*, written by Mr. Shepherd, a jeweller in London, father, I believe, of Sir Samuel Shepherd, late Chief Baron of Scotland, was occasioned by Mr. Townley having been presented with an early cast of the seal representing the profile of Garrick contemplating the mask of Shakspeare.

Soon as this packet you unfold,
Methinks I hear you say,
How 's this? my Garrick set in gold?
Declare the reason, pray!
Thus, then, to free myself from blame,
The reason I reveal;
His head deserves a golden frame,
Your hand a golden seal.

Since the above was written, I have had some reason to fear that the dramatic sketches of Townley were voluntarily destroyed a short time ago, and that *False Concord* was among them.

Garrick was, however, independent of his professional reputation, an eminent man; the papers which he has bequeathed to posterity evince the general excellence of his private conduct, and the universal regard in which he was himself held; poets and philosophers, artists and statesmen, worth and virtue, thronged, if I may say so, to the altar of his numerous merits; and posterity has few similar examples of the warmth with which contemporaries may regard talent, equal to the reverence paid to David Garrick. He was, in his profession, a splendid example of what judicious behaviour combined with genius may attain, for he reaped renown and riches. To the general world he afforded also a cheering incentive; the proud eminence to which he raised himself was generously acknowledged as his proper place, and the blemishes that envy and malice attempted to fasten on him were only as insignificant as the stains of the insects on the alabaster of his statue. He was in every thing distinguished; and though in those manifestations of ability in which he was undoubtedly greatest, we have only the testimony of the aged, yet their record is inscribed with a warmth and energy which compels us to confess that he deserved all the applause that embalms his memory. In him talent and good sense were elegantly united, and if it be acknowledged that he was of the highest order of genius in the mimic scene, it must also be conceded that he was eminent for many shining virtues as a man.

From the evening on which he quitted the stage he was respected as an opulent private gentleman; but he did not altogether forego his ability to delight. In the same season he was put into the commission of the peace, but he was not known to have ever acted in the

character of a justice: the trust, however, was a becoming compliment; he had earned it by the correctness of his own conduct, and by the fortune which that conduct had insured to him. A chronic disease, however, deprived him of the capacity of enjoying the comfort and happiness which he had hoped would attend his retirement; and on the 20th of January 1779 he breathed his last, at his house on the Adelphi-terrace, and was interred on the 1st of February following with great funeral pomp in Westminster Abbey, where a splendid monument has since been erected to his memory.

## SAMUEL FOOTE.

Samuel Foote was a native of Truro, where he was born about the year 1720. As his father was a respectable country gentleman and a magistrate of the county, he must be regarded as in point of birth considerably superior to the players in general.

He was educated at Worcester, and by his quickness gave an early promise of future talent. He was indeed, as he said himself, the *father* of many good things when but a mere *child*. His singular talent for mimicry is said to have been unfolded by the following accident.

Being at his father's during the Christmas holidays, a man in the parish had been charged with a bastard child, which excited some conversation in the family. Sam, then a boy between eleven and twelve, remarked, "I foresee how this business will end, as well as what the justices will say upon it."

"Ay," said his father; "well, Sam, let us hear it."

Upon this he dressed up his face in a strong caricature likeness of one of their neighbours, a justice of the peace, and thus proceeded:—

"'Hem! hem! here's a fine job of work broke out indeed! a feller begetting bastards under our very noses, (and let me tell you, good people, a common labouring rascal, too,) when our taxes are so great, and our poor-rates so high; why, 'tis an abomination; we shall not

have an honest servant maid in the neighbourhood, and the whole parish will swarm with bastards: therefore, I say, let him be fined for his pranks very severely; and if the rascal has not money, (as indeed how should he have it?) or can't find security, (as indeed how should such a feller find security?) let him be clapped up in prison till he find it!'

"The other justice will be milder.

"'Well, well, brother, this is not a new case; bastards have been begotten before now, and bastards will be begotten to the end of the chapter; therefore, though the man has committed a crime—and indeed, I must say, a crime that holds out a very bad example to a neighbourhood like this—yet let us not ruin the poor fellow for this one fault; he may do better and mend his life; therefore let him be obliged to provide for the child according to the best of his abilities, giving two honest neighbours as a security for the payment.'"

This waggish performance greatly amused all present; but Mr. Foote inquired why he was omitted, and with the rest of the company requested Sam to proceed, who, after some persuasion, said, like his father,—

"'Why, upon my word, in respect to this here business, to be sure it is rather an awkward affair; and to be sure it ought not to be; that is to say, the justices of the peace should not suffer such things to be done with impunity: however, on the whole, I am of the opinion of my brother on the right, which is, that the man should pay according to his circumstances, and be admonished —I say admonished—not to commit such a flagrant offence for the future.'"

In this Sam acquitted himself to the infinite amusement of the company, and imitated the plain matter-of-

fact manner of his father so well, that the old gentleman was much diverted, and rewarded him for his humour.

From the school he passed with *éclat* to Worcester College, Oxford, and was put under the care of Dr. Gower, the then Provost, a fit subject for his wit and humour, and soon, in consequence, an object of his tricks. The church belonging to the college fronted the side of a lane, into which cattle were sometimes turned during the night, and from the steeple hung the bell-rope very low in the middle of the outside porch. Foote, one night, slily tied a wisp of hay to the rope as a bait for the cows, and one of them, after smelling the hay, instantly seized on it, and tugging, made the bell ring, to the astonishment of the whole parish. This trick was several times repeated.

Such a phenomenon must be investigated for the honour of Oxford and philosophy, and accordingly the Provost with the Sexton agreed to sit up one night, and on the first alarm to run out and drag the culprit to punishment. They waited in the church shuddering for the signal: at last the bell began to toll—forth they sallied in the dark. The sexton was the first in the attack: he cried out "It is a gentleman commoner, for I have him by the gown." The Doctor, who at the same moment caught the cow by the horn, replied, "No, no, you blockhead, 'tis the postman, and here I have hold of him by his horn." Lights, however, being brought, the true character of the offender was discovered, and the laugh of the town was turned upon Doctor Gower.

When Foote was enjoined to learn certain tasks in consequence of his idleness, he used to come with a large folio dictionary under his arm, and repeat his lessons,

and then the Doctor would give him several wholesome lectures on the dangers of idleness. In this lecture he usually made use of many hard words and quaint phrases, at which the other would immediately interrupt him, and after begging pardon with great formality, would take the dictionary from under his arm, and affect to search up the word, would then pretend he had found it, and say "Very well, Sir; now please to go on."

On leaving College, Foote entered himself of the Temple; but the study of the law was ill suited to his character. He, however, continued in chambers several years, during which he set no limits to his prodigal expenditure, and what extravagance in living spared of his fortune, the gaming-table soon after devoured.

In January 1741 he married a gentlewoman of Worcester, with the approbation of their respective friends, but it was not a happy union. They had no children, and her dispositions, though gentle and affectionate, were not congenial to his volatile humour. It does not, however, appear that any particular disagreement caused them to suffer other afflictions than those arising from his thoughtlessness, and she died before age came to incite distaste.

A curious circumstance is related in connexion with his marriage. He and his wife were invited by his father to spend a month with him in Cornwall; when, very much to their surprise, on the first night as they were going to bed, they were entertained with a concert of music, seemingly under their window, executed in the most melodious manner. This lasted about twenty minutes. Next morning, on complimenting his father for his gallantry, the old gentleman absolutely denied all knowledge of the affair, and doubted the possibility of its

having occurred. The young couple were, however, positive as to what they had heard, and our hero was so impressed by it, that he made a memorandum of the time, which afterwards turned out to be the very night that his uncle, Sir John Dineley Goodere, was murdered by his brother.

Foote always asserted the fact of this occurrence with a most striking gravity of belief, though he could not account for it. One day being asked whether he ought not to attribute it to a supernatural cause? He replied, "No, I never could bring my mind to that; but this I can tell you, it has made an impression upon me, that if I once thought so, I would not be out of a convent a single day longer."

A story of this kind baffles conjecture, but the coincidence with the murder was calculated to rivet it upon the remembrance, especially as the chronicles of guilt have recorded few cases which exceed in atrocity that foul and barbarous crime.

A disagreement had arisen between the two brothers, which induced Sir John to cut off the entail of his estates, and settle them on his sister's (Mrs. Foote) family. This widened the breach, and the brothers in consequence had not spoken to each other for several years. Matters were in this state, when the two brothers Captain Goodere and the Baronet accidentally arrived at Bristol; Sir John upon a party of pleasure, and Samuel as commander of his Majesty's ship the Ruby, then lying in King's Road. The latter hearing that Sir John was to dine at the house of a mutual friend on the Sunday following, requested to be admitted as a guest in order to reconcile himself to his brother. Their friend readily acceded to this proposal, and on the day appointed in-

troduced the two brothers to each other, who were soon seemingly reconciled. But all this on the part of Captain Goodere was only a prelude to the most savage transaction. Captain Goodere went away first in the evening, but scarcely had Sir John soon after left the house, when passing College Green, a band of ruffians belonging to the Ruby and a privateer then in the river, with his brother at their head, suddenly seized upon him and hurried him away with the utmost violence to a boat which was in attendance, and thence on board the Ruby, the Captain assisting all the while, covering Sir John with a cloak to deaden his cries.

When they had got him into the purser's cabin, the Captain, by promises of reward and promotion, prevailed on two of the ruffians to strangle him; but the details of this bloody work are too horrible to be described without a special cause. Owing to the awkwardness of the murderers, arising from their own compunction, and the struggles of their victim, they were above half an hour in accomplishing their crime.

Next morning the circumstance of a gentleman being hurried over College Green by ruffians, and the cries of murder being repeatedly heard, induced the gentleman, at whose house the brothers had dined, to make some inquiry: the crime was detected, and the Captain with the two murderers were seized, tried, and executed. By this event Mrs. Foote, the mother of our hero, deriving under the will of her brother Sir John, became heiress to his estates.

The father died soon after the marriage of Sam, but the mother lived to the extreme age of eighty-four, through various fortunes. It seems to have been from her that our hero inherited many of his eccentricities.

Her manners and conversation were of the same cast—witty, humorous, and social, and she was always a delightful companion, though her remarks sometimes rather strayed beyond the limits of becoming mirth; and in her personal appearance she greatly resembled her facetious son: she resembled him also in her character, for she squandered without care, and was often in difficulty. Under one of her temporary embarrassments she wrote to him the following laconic epistle, which with his answer affords an amusing specimen of their likeness to each other.

"DEAR SAM,

"I am in prison for debt; come and assist your loving mother,

"E. FOOTE."

"DEAR MOTHER,

"So am I; which prevents his duty being paid to his loving mother by her affectionate son,

"SAM FOOTE."

"P.S. I have sent my attorney to assist you; in the mean time let us hope for better days."

But to return to his wedded life Mrs. Foote his wife was so much kept in the back-ground by the gay eccentric life her lord led, that little is known of her history except that she was the very reverse of him. Mildness and forbearance were the leading features of her character; but these qualities were no check upon his temper. She, however, bore her part in his troubles with exemplary fidelity. Once, when an old college friend was in town, not long after Foote's marriage, he intended to pay him a visit, but was surprised to find

he was then in the Fleet prison. Thither he hastened directly, and found him in a two-pair of stairs back room, with furniture every way suitable to such an apartment. Shocked at this circumstance, he began to condole with Foote, when the wit cut him short by turning the whole into raillery. The stranger, while he was speaking, perceived something stir behind him in the bed; upon which he got up, and said he would call another time. "No, no," said Foote, "sit down, 'tis nothing but my FOOT." "Your foot! well, I want no apologies, I shall call another time." "I tell you again 'tis nothing but my FOOT, and to convince you of its being no more, it shall speak to you directly." Upon this poor Mrs. Foote put her head from under the bed-clothes, and made many apologies for her situation.

This connexion on his part was certainly not endearing, and at one time he resolved to make her more comfortable, as he said, by parting with her; but after a separation of some months, his friends remonstrated with him for such undeserved treatment, and he consented to take her back. But without inquiring into her particular character, he undoubtedly never treated her as he ought to have done, although he had no cause to disparage her homely virtues.

It was soon after the embarrassments consequent on his marriage and imprudence that he was induced to think of the stage; but he became an author before an actor, and his first effort in that way partook of the habitual carelessness which so materially affected the colour of his life. It was a narrative of the murder of his uncle, in which he undertook the defence of the fratricide. It is true that when he undertook this he was a very young man, and had just outrun his fortune.

In these distressed circumstances, without trade or profession, he was solicited by a bookseller in the Old Bailey, with ten pounds in hand and ten more on the sale reaching a stipulated extent, to write upon this subject, then the popular story of the day.

While engaged on this task, an anecdote is told of him, one of the most characteristic I have ever met with. On carrying his manuscript to his bookseller, he was in such necessitous circumstances, that he was actually obliged to wear his boots without stockings, and on receiving his ten pounds, he stopped at a hosier's to repair this defect. He had scarcely issued from the shop when he was met by two or three of his old college friends, who had just arrived in London on a frolic, and he agreed to dine with them at the Bedford together. As it was his maxim that rigid economy was the most mortifying thing next to absolute want, he perhaps thought, in joining this party, of only losing the memory of his recent privations in a little conviviality.

While the wine and good-humour circulated, one of his companions observing his boots, cried out "Why, hey, Foote, how is this? you seem to have no stockings on." "No," replied the other, instantly recollecting himself, "I never wear any at this time of the year, till I am going to dress for the evening; and you see I am always provided with a pair for the occasion," and he pulled out the pair he had in his pocket, white silk ones, and silenced the laugh of his friends, and prevented their suspicion of his poverty. It is, however, chiefly his professional life that I proposed to give, and it is not very germane to the matter to minutely describe his literary career. But it is by these anecdotes sufficiently obvious that his

case did not differ much from that of others, in betaking himself to the stage to obtain a livelihood, though blind to the peculiarities by which he was destined to acquire his celebrity.

His first appearance was at the Haymarket Theatre, on the 6th of February 1744, in the character of Othello, under the directions of Macklin; but in this part, though much cheered by his numerous friends, his *debût* was not deserving of particular applause. Macklin, who was the Iago of the night, said it was little better than a total failure. His friends, in consequence, advised him to try comedy, and he came forth with no more success as Lord Foppington. In a word, he found the legitimate walk of the actor not the course he should pursue, and accordingly struck out a new path for himself, by appearing in the double character of author and performer, and opened the Haymarket Theatre in the spring of 1747, with a new piece of his own writing, called *The Diversions of the Morning*.

This entertainment resembled in many respects the kind of monologues which have been so much the delight of our own age by the admirable tact and humour of Mathews. Foote at the time and during his whole life had the peculiar zest of personal mimicry, but Mathews has gone a step farther, by performing alone different imaginary characters in the same manner that Foote imitated the peculiarities of well-known persons.

The success of Foote in this novel species of entertainment excited the jealousy of the great theatres; complaints were made as if he had really immorally violated the law; constables were employed to dismiss his audience, and for a time his career was arrested.

But as Mathews holds his "at Homes," Foote invited the public "TO TEA," and his invitation was accepted with avidity.

The conception of this entertainment did credit to his eccentric taste and talent. While the audience were sitting wondering what it would be, the manager came forward, and after making his bow, acquainted them "That as he was training some young performers for the stage, he would, with their permission, whilst tea was getting ready, proceed with his instructions before them;" and he then commenced a series of ludicrous imitations of the players, who, one and all, became exceedingly exasperated against him, but their anger only served to make him more visited. Few amusements were ever so popular.

Next year he produced another piece of the same kind, which he called *The Auction of Pictures*, in which he introduced several town characters then well known. I refer, however, to his works, with a wish that a key were attached to them, for the originals in the course of a short time will be forgotten.

About the close of 1748, Foote had a considerable fortune left him by a relation, which enabled him once more to resume the congenial dissipation of a man of fashion; and after glittering a short time about town, he went over to Paris, and returned from the Continent in 1752, though he did not make his appearance in public till the subsequent year. He had not, however, wasted all his time in dissipation while abroad, for he brought with him a comedy, in two acts, called *Taste*, a composition which exhibited both his acumen and peculiarities.

About 1755 Murphy began to appear upon the town

as a critic and dramatic writer, and being in close intimacy with Foote, wrote a piece called *The Englishman returned from Paris.* This he communicated to him, which the other so much approved of, that he secretly intended to make it his own, and accordingly setting to work on Murphy's materials, soon finished a farce on the same plan, and with the same title, so rapidly that he brought it out at Covent Garden Theatre in February 1756.

This dishonourable trick surprised Murphy beyond measure. But what could he do? Foote was a man to be only laughed at or with through life; and accordingly Murphy took no other notice of it, than by publishing his own piece a few months afterwards, and inserting in the passage where some doubt is suggested as to the identity of Sir Charles Buck from Paris, a reply from Sir Charles —"Oh, yes, I grant you there has been an impostor about town, who, with much easy familiarity and assurance, has stolen my writings, and not only treacherously robbed me, but impudently dared to assume my very name even to my face: I am the true Sir Charles Buck, I can assure you." Foote's is, however, a better farce, and richer in a greater variety of characters; but as he was born without shame, he only exulted and laughed at the success of his roguery.

In 1757, he brought out *The Author*, a work, like all his other productions, dependent on the ability displayed in giving it effect by personal imitations. It acquired considerable celebrity by the freedom it was conceived he had taken, in the character of Cadwallader, with a Mr. Aprice, a man of fortune, and one of Foote's own friends. This farce was frequently performed before Mr. Aprice was aware that the caricature was of himself, and he had

often laughed at it in common with the audience; at last the public applied it to him, and he was exceedingly annoyed wherever he went at being saluted as "Cadwallader," insomuch that, unable to withstand the ridicule, he solicited the Lord Chamberlain to prohibit the performance, which was granted. But the peculiarities of Cadwallader, or rather of Mr. Aprice, were very much like some of Foote's own, who certainly was not less proud of the antiquity of his pedigree. On an occasion, soon after the publication of *The Author*, his friends played him an arch trick upon this foible. As they were laughing at persons piquing themselves on their descent, one of them slyly observed that, however people might laugh at family, he believed there never was a man well descended who was not proud of it. Foote, snapping the bait, replied, "No doubt, no doubt; for instance, now, though I trust I may be considered far from a vain man, yet, being descended from as ancient a family as any in Cornwall, I am not a little proud of it, as, indeed, you shall see I may be;" and accordingly ordered a servant to bring the genealogical tree of the family, which he began to elucidate with all the absurdity that he so felicitously ridiculed in Cadwallader.

Next year he visited Dublin with Tate Wilkinson—a mimic, in the opinion of Garrick, not inferior to Foote himself—and, with the assistance of his companion, performed with great profit and *éclat*. One night, Wilkinson ventured to imitate Foote himself, and the audience cried out "Foote outdone;" *he* did not, however, think so, but complimented Wilkinson, when the play was over, on his general success, saying he was welcome to make free with him, as the mimic mimicked was certainly fair game, but, as his friend, he would tell him that he thought *his*

*part* the worst imitation of the whole; indeed, so bad, that he was afraid it would damn the reputation of the rest.

During Foote's stay in Dublin he was much caressed, both for his talents as a dramatic writer and a gentleman possessed of extraordinary wit and pleasantry. On returning to London, Garrick engaged him, with Wilkinson, at Drury Lane, where their peculiar abilities were attended with extraordinary profit and applause—but the poor players, the chief subjects of their mimicry, were greatly annoyed. One of them, Parsons, even suffered so much from the manner in which he was imitated, that he took to his bed in illness under the mortification.

But although the success of Foote, both as an author and an actor, was greatly productive, no income could keep pace with his expenditure, and he was, in consequence, ever in difficulty. He generally kept a town and a country house, a chariot, horses, and servants, and with a table mostly occupied with persons of the first distinction for rank and wit.

In consequence of this hospitable squandering, early in 1759, finding himself beset with duns, to raise the wind, he made a trip to Scotland, and for the expenses on the road he was obliged to borrow a hundred pounds from Garrick. The trip, however, turned out profitable, and he was well received by the gentry of Edinburgh as well as by the public in general. The Scots, nevertheless, did not escape his sarcasm. At a gentleman's table in the country, an old lady being called upon for a toast, gave *Charles the Third.* "Of Spain, Madam," said Foote. "No, Sir," cried the lady, with some pettishness, "of England."—"Never mind her," said one of the company, "she is one of our old folks who have not got rid of their political prejudices."—"Oh, dear Sir, make no apology," cried

Foote, "I was prepared for all this; as, from your living so far north, I suppose none of you have yet heard of the Revolution."

The following winter he again went to Dublin, where he brought out his afterwards greatly-celebrated play of *The Minor;* of which, on the night it was first represented, the reception was but cool, and the piece was subsequently withdrawn, for that season. Altogether, this excursion to Dublin fell short of what he had hoped, and he returned to London with his purse far from being replenished; but, without alterations, he brought out *The Minor* there, and it proved eminently successful.

In 1761 he became reconciled to Murphy, and during the summer they obtained permission to open Drury Lane together, which they did with Murphy's comedy of *All in the Wrong.* This summer speculation, however, did not realize the expectations of the partners. In January following, he brought out at Covent Garden Theatre a comedy in three acts, *The Liar;* afterwards, in the following summer, another piece, *The Orators*, the design of which was to expose the prevailing passion for oratory—the affair of the supposed Cock-lane ghost, and the Debating Society held at the Robin Hood.

In the performing of the latter, some real characters were to be sacrificed, and among others the renowned Dr. Samuel Johnson, who was said to have been a willing believer in the ghost. But this intention coming to the Doctor's ears, he employed a friend to buy for him a stout oak cudgel, and at the same time caused it to be made known, both to the author and the public, that he intended "to plant himself in the front of the stage-box on the first night of representation, and if any buffoon attempted to take him off, or treat him with any degree of

personal ridicule, to spring forward on the stage, knock him down in the face of the audience, and then appeal to their common feelings and protection."

This rough declaration frightened Aristophanes; but considering that Dr. Johnson was in the habit of enjoying the satirist's imitations of others, in justice, he would not have had much to complain of, had he been a little laughed at himself. He was a coarse, unamiable person, and his peculiarities and affectations were such, that if the public mimicry of private individuals can be justified, the surly sage was as good a subject as any other. But although the Doctor was alarmed at the idea of being introduced on the stage, his criticisms on the character and talents of Foote are among the most judicious that were given. "He is not a good mimic," said the Doctor; "but he has art, a fertility and variety of images, and is not deficient in reading. He has knowledge enough to fill up his part: then he has great range for his wit; he never lets truth stand between him and a jest: and he is sometimes mighty coarse."

It being observed to him that Foote had a singular talent of exhibiting character, the Doctor replied, "No, Sir; it is not a talent, it is a vice: it is what others abstain from."

At another time, Dr. Johnson, in speaking of his abilities, said, "I don't think Foote a good mimic. His imitations are not like: he gives you something different from himself, without going into other people. He cannot take off any person, except he is strongly marked. He is like a painter who can draw the portrait of a man who has a wen upon his face, and who, therefore, is easily known. If a man hops upon one leg, Foote can hop upon one leg; but he has not a nice discrimination of character.

He is, however, upon the whole, very entertaining, with a particular species of conversation, between art and buffoonery. I am afraid, however, Foote has no principle. He is at times neither governed by good manners nor discretion, and very little by affection. But for a broad laugh (and here the Doctor would himself gruffly smile at the recollection of it), I must confess, the scoundrel has no fellow."

"The first time," said the Doctor, on another occasion, "I ever was in company with Foote, I was resolved not to be pleased—and it is very difficult to please a man against his will. I went on eating my dinner pretty sullenly, affecting for a long time not to mind him; but the dog was so very comical, that I was obliged to lay down my knife and fork, throw myself back on my chair, and fairly laugh it out with the rest: there was no avoiding it—the fellow was irresistible."

In 1763, Foote produced his celebrated farce of *The Mayor of Garratt;* a bold, spirited caricature, possessing the rare merit of being so judiciously pitched, if the expression may be allowed, and so harmoniously sustained throughout, that, although greatly overcharged, it still seems exceedingly natural. But, like that of all Foote's satires, which were either of personal characteristics, or of particular fashions, the raciness of its original flavour has evaporated, and the change that has since come upon manners and customs has made it now, not only obsolete but absurd.

The approbation with which this piece was received was such, that the receipts mended his fortune and his expensive habits revived. He repaired both his town and country houses, extended his hospitalities, and actually laid out 1200*l.* on a service of plate. When reminded

by one of his friends of this extravagance, he replied, that he acted from a principle of economy; for as he knew he could never keep his gold, he prudently laid out his money in silver. In this year he reconciled himself to Tate Wilkinson, whom, on his return from Edinburgh, he had treated rather scurvily, and for five years there had, in consequence, been no intercourse between them. Their reconciliation was, however, sincere, and continued uninterrupted till the death of Foote. At the time of this reconciliation, the attractive powers of the friends were re-enforced by enlisting Weston, an actor of the legitimate blood, and possessed of talents, especially in comic simplicity, of the most extraordinary kind.

In 1764, strengthened by Wilkinson and Weston, Foote took the field with his comedy of *The Patron*, in which, though he did not so cleverly hit the taste of the town, as in some of his other works, he has yet placed both his judgment and knowledge of human nature in a very conspicuous light, and good critics have estimated its merits as at least equal to those of his best compositions. It had not, however, the charm of personal imitations. In the subsequent summer, he produced the comedy of *The Commissary*, the satire of which fell in with public opinion, and in consequence, although not seasoned with personalities, was greatly relished.

In 1766, by being thrown from his horse, one of his legs was broken in two places, in such a manner as to require amputation; a misfortune which, however dangerous at the time, and inconvenient afterwards, did not ultimately much affect his talent for amusing the million; and he bore the operation, not only with fortitude, but even with jocularity.

In one respect, this accident was productive of good-

fortune. It happened in the presence of the Duke of York, the brother of George III. who did every thing in his power to alleviate its consequences; and among other good offices, obtained for him a royal patent to erect a theatre in Westminster, with a privilege of exhibiting dramatic pieces there, from the 14th of May to the 14th of September, during his natural life; under which, Foote immediately purchased the Haymarket Theatre, which hitherto he had only rented.

In 1768, while his genius was in the brightest glow, his fatal propensity to gaming overcame him at Bath on his way to Ireland, and he lost all his money, about seventeen hundred pounds, and was in consequence obliged to borrow as much as would defray the expenses of his journey. But Fortune, though she could not keep up with him, was ever at his heels, and the success of his Dublin excursion at that time indemnified him for the losses of his Bath adventure. His dilapidated finances being thus repaired, he returned to London in 1769, and resumed his professional avocations.

Towards the close of the dramatic season of that year, the public attention, having at the time no other object, was greatly engrossed by a proposal to celebrate the birth and genius of Shakspeare, by a jubilee at Stratford-on-Avon, an account of which ought to hold a distinguished place in the annals of the Drama. It originated in consequence of a clergyman, (who had purchased a property in Stratford, including the house and grounds where Shakspeare had resided,) cutting down a remarkable mulberry-tree which had been planted by the poet's own hands, and which was regarded by the inhabitants of the town with a kind of religious veneration.

The rumour of this sacrilege roused the whole community—not the extinction of the vestal fire at Rome, nor the stealing of the Trojan palladium, produced a greater sensation. The inhabitants of Stratford, men, women, and children, gathered round the house in successive crowds; dogs stood sullen, and cats wrung their hands; and when they beheld the fallen tree, they were almost moved to sacrifice the offender. The tumult was, in fact, prodigious, considering the occasion, and the culprit was obliged to fly the town at once; and the inhabitants came to a resolution "never to admit any of the same family, or even of the same name, to reside among them." It is not said how long this civic taste lasted.

The mulberry-tree was instantly purchased, cut up, and retailed as sacred relics, as stand-dishes, tea-chests, medallions. I have myself a tobacco-pipe stopper thereof. Of these, the Corporation of Stratford secured the best part; and in a box made of this wood, they inclosed the freedom of the town to Garrick, as the great illustrator of the bard's conceptions. This flattering compliment suggested to him the idea of a jubilee, and the proposal met with universal approbation. All summer jaunts; all trips to watering-places; all fêtes at home; all engagements from abroad, were for a time suspended. Young and old, the halt and the lame—even the blind—went to see the miraculous lion of the jubilee. Foote was of course in the throng, and took every occasion, in squibs and sarcasms, to arraign Garrick's taste and judgment in the whole affair—and, indeed, nothing could be more magnificently ridiculous. But his spleen took a more acrid character when he discovered that Garrick, at the theatre, intended to turn a penny out of it; ac-

cordingly he beset him, both in company and by the public papers, with all the force of his satire, and raised a chorus of laughter against him.

Owing to the wetness of the weather, the concern at Stratford had proved a sad dripping and dabbled-in-the-dirt affair; but the exhibition of it which Garrick got up in Drury Lane Theatre, was such a capital hit, that Foote was maddened by its success, and in his ire resolved to bring out a mock procession, and introduce Garrick himself on the stage as the principal figure. A man was to be dressed to resemble the grand manager, in the character of steward of the jubilee, with his wand, white gloves, and the mulberry-tree medallion of Shakspeare hanging at his breast; while some droll was to address him in the well-known lines of the jubilee laureate—

> "A nation's taste depends on you;
> Perhaps a nation's virtues too!"

to which the counterfeit Garrick was to make no other answer, but clap his arms like the wings of a cock, and cry out—

> "Cock a doodle-doo!"

Garrick himself had early intelligence of the scheme, and was as if he had come skinless from the knife of Spagnoletto. He writhed in misery, and all his laurels withered on his brow, until he became such a pitiful object that the friends of the parties deemed it necessary to interfere. It was in consequence so contrived that the mimic and the manager met, as if by accident, at the house of a nobleman, a common friend. When alighting at the same time from their chariots at his Lordship's door, Garrick at once saw the object for which they were brought together; and after exchanging significant looks,

Garrick broke silence, by asking, "Is it war or peace?" —"Oh! peace, by all means," replied Foote, with much apparent good-humour. Thus John Bull was frustrated of his fun, and their old seeming friendship was restored.

The new piece with which Foote amused the public in 1770 was the comedy of *The Lame Lover;* but as the chief amusement of this piece depends on the performers, critics have not esteemed its literary merits, though these are great, as at all equal to many of his other productions. This was followed by the comedy of *The Maid of Bath*, founded on circumstances well known at the time, and composed in a spirit of better-natured pleasantry than often visited the writing-table of the author.

Soon after, at the conclusion of the season, he was again invited to winter in Edinburgh, and accordingly prepared for the journey, which he commenced in October 1771, and stayed in Scotland till the March following. But the novelty of his performances having now abated, his trip was not so gratifying as when he went to Edinburgh before.

When he returned to London, he was excited by a general outcry, which had been raised against several members of the East India Company, who, from small beginnings, had raised immense fortunes in a short period. These new men, from the extent of their purses and extravagance, not only ousted many of the old families from their seats in Parliament, but erected superb mansions about the country, and blazed in all the pomp of Oriental splendour. Foote laid hold of the popular disgust at this overweening greatness, and composed *The Nabob*, to ridicule the ostentatious pretensions that had proved so offensive to the ancient feelings of the nation. By this production the East Indians were inflamed

against him, and two gentlemen, who had held high situations in India, undertook personally to chastise him. They accordingly furnished themselves with cudgels, and sallied forth to his house in Suffolk-street. On their arrival they sent up their names, and Foote received them in his drawing-room with that address and politeness which no one better knew how and when to practise. This had an immediate effect; instead of attacking him with their sticks, they began to remonstrate, by stating the insult which particular persons of character and fortune had sustained by the licentiousness of his pen, and for no other reason than because Providence had favoured their industry and enterprise.

They were proceeding in this strain, warming in wrath, when Foote, gently interrupting them, requested they would but hear him one word—which was to beg they would only state their grievances with temper till he made his justification, and then, if they were not fully satisfied, he was willing to meet every consequence.

The gentlemen then resumed, and when they had finished, Foote began by assuring them, in the most solemn manner, that he had no particular person in view as the hero of his comedy; that he took up his story from popular report; and that as he was by trade a wholesale character-monger, he thought he was perfectly secure from giving offence to individuals, particularly to the honourable part of the East India Company's servants, by satirizing in a general way those who had acted otherwise. He followed up this apology by taking his comedy and explaining to them, so much to their satisfaction, that it was only a general satire on the unworthy part of the nabob gentry, that his visitors took coffee and stayed with him to dinner, delighted with his wit and the con-

viviality of his other guests. Peace, by their account of the visit, was thus restored between Foote and the India corps. Perhaps we have few instances of personal manners having, in similar circumstances, such a decided effect. The conduct of Foote was admirable, but the world, we suspect, will not have much admiration to spare either for the understanding or address of the Oriental champions.

Till 1775, our hero was actively employed in his professional affairs, writing, acting, and travelling; but in that year, having, in *The Trip to Calais*, ridiculed, under the name of Lady Kitty Crocodile, the eccentric Duchess of Kingston, he incurred the anger of that resolute and vindictive dame, who rallied her friends and obtained the interdict of the Lord Chamberlain on the performance of the piece. A correspondence, in consequence, arose between the Duchess and Foote, which, however amusing it may have been in the gossiping of the time, has no other merit now than what may proceed from seeing how much a lady could throw off all delicacy, and a gentleman descend to scurrility.

Next year he altered the prohibited play, and brought it out under the title of *The Capuchin*, a comedy which, though as a whole certainly not of a high order, yet possesses scenes which, for terseness of language and shrewdness of remark, have not their equals out of the works of Shakspeare. The individual against whom the satire was chiefly levelled was a Dr. Jackson, the editor of a newspaper and the bosom friend of the Duchess; but the revenge which this unprincipled person attempted to take was so diabolical, both as respects the charge and the satanic zeal and constancy with which it was for a time supported, that it can only be alluded to. The result,

however, was according to the conviction of Foote's friends; but the agitation he had suffered withered his talents, and, conscious of the shock his frame had sustained, he immediately began to prepare for the consequences. On the 16th of January 1777, he disposed of his property in the Haymarket Theatre to George Colman, for a clear annuity of sixteen hundred pounds, payable quarterly, together with a specific sum for the right of acting his unpublished pieces.

According to this arrangement, the theatre, under the management of Colman, was opened in the May following, and a few nights afterwards Foote came on, as a performer only, in his own comedy of *The Devil upon Two Sticks;* but when he appeared on the stage, the whole audience were grieved at the blight which had evidently fallen upon him: his cheeks were wan and meagre, his eyes had lost their wonted intelligence, and his whole person appeared blasted. He rallied, however, a little in the course of the evening; but the public seemed to accept his services rather in remembrance of what he had been, than for what he then was. This visible decay soon after obliged him to relinquish the stage, and he spent the remainder of the season at Brighton, where having in some degree recovered his spirits, he was advised by his physicians to try the South of France. With this intent, he reached Dover on the 20th of October, in his way to Calais. The wind proving unfavourable on that day, he was in consequence detained; but his spirits rallied, and among other whimsical sallies in which he indulged, one of them is humorous, and characteristic of the man.

On going into the kitchen to order a particular dish for dinner, the cook, understanding that he was about to

embark for France, began to say that, for her part, she was never out of her own country. "Why, Cookey," said Foote, "that's very extraordinary, as they tell me above-stairs that you have been several times all over Grease (Greece)."—"They may say what they please," replied the Cook, "but I was never ten miles from Dover in all my life."—"Nay," said Foote, "that must be a fib, for I have seen you myself at Spithead:" a sally which amused all the servants in the kitchen, in whose laughter he heartily joined, and gave them a crown to drink his health and a good voyage.

This, however, was but the last blaze in the socket, for next morning he was seized with a shivering fit at breakfast, and he was put to bed. Another succeeded, which lasted three hours. He then seemed composed, and inclined to sleep; but soon began to breathe low, and at last, with a deep sigh, expired, on the 21st of October 1777, in the fifty-seventh year of his age. The body was removed to London, where it was, in the course of a short time, interred in Westminster Abbey by torch-light—an awful and reverential ceremony.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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